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ABSTRACT

This document contains the six issues of "Rural Roots" published bimonthly in 2002. A newsletter of the Rural School and Community Trust, "Rural Roots" provides news, information, and commentary from the Rural Trust and highlights the wide variety of place-based education work happening in rural schools and communities across the country. Feature articles include: "Chef Cooks Up a Community Development Harvest in Rural West Virginia" (Alison Yaunches); "Teacher Development: Missouri's North Nodaway School District's Professional Development Program Improves Teacher Effectiveness and Student Achievement"; "A First Person Account of the Rural Trust's Education Renewal Zone Initiative in Missouri" (Vicki M. Hobbs); "Small Works: Schools in Three States Showcase Virtues of Small Size" (Alison Yaunches); "A Firsthand Account of Teaching in a Small School" (Susan McNeil); "Learning and Living with Diversity in Schleicher County, Texas" (Alison Yaunches); "Students from Small, Northern California Town Create a Usable Work of Art"; "LUPE Lends a Hand to the Mexican-Americans of Ojai Valley" (Kelly Midori McCormick); "Connecting Communities and Classrooms" (Elaina Loveland); "Community Collaboration for Place-Based Studies Celebrates Local Natural and Cultural History" (June LaCombe); "Rural Schools Participate in Youth Civic Engagement Initiative" (Elaina Loveland); "Leader Sees Growing Trend in Youth Civic Engagement: An Interview with Wendy Wheeler"; "Challenges and Rewards of Rural School Leadership" (Elaina Loveland); "The Sharing of Authority"; and "Diary of a Rural School Leader: What Really Matters Anyway?" (Jeanne Surface). Issues also contain notices of conferences and new publications; brief articles on school projects, rural education research, and technical assistance and funding opportunities; and organizational news of the Rural Trust. (SV)

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Rural Roots

News, Information, and Commentary from the Rural School and Community Trust

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Volume 3, No. 1
February 2002

THE RURAL SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY TRUST

ISSN 1532-642X

Rural Roots

News, Information, and Commentary from the Rural School and Community Trust

Chef Cooks Up a Community Development Harvest in Rural West Virginia

Chef Harv with the local 4-H youth for the pancake flipping contest as part of the Six Easy Bites program.

By Alison Yaunches

In the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia, a chef and his company are at the center of an economic development strategy that benefits the region's rural farmers, community members, families and students. With the chef's production kitchen and intuitive food knowledge, locally grown produce is transformed from fresh fruit, vegetables and herbs into gourmet specialty food items—lengthening the crops' shelf life while adding value.

The chef is Harvey ("Chef Harv") Christie and his company, Gourmet Central, is a partner in Highland Harvest, a limited-liability corporation (LLC) that also includes the Lightstone Foundation's Community Development Corporation, the West Virginia University Extension, the Hampshire County Economic Development Authority and 15 local farmers. This collaboration of different organizations and individuals makes it possible for farmers to manage their crops all the way from the field to their retail sale. Highland Harvest also helps make farming in Hampshire County viable as it brings together farmers and their produce with the community.

According to Chef Harv, the collaboration works so well because everyone involved shares a common goal. "We all wanted to keep the local, rural farming community alive. We saw value in keeping our large, open, green spaces," says Christie.

The Highland Harvest Experience

Gourmet Central has been operating since 1989. The company employs 15–20 staff members (depending on the season) and receives thousands of agricultural tourism visitors a year. With over 100 products offered, ranging from amaretto peach conserve to pecan pesto

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Rural*Datebook*

25th Annual Appalachian Studies Conference

Unicoi State Park, Helen, Georgia

Entitled *Voices from the Margins, Living on the Fringe*, this conference will feature papers, presentations and performances by Hispanic, Latino, African-American and Cherokee communities, as well as women and girls, gays and lesbians, prisoners and others from the outskirts or margins of Appalachia. This annual conference is for scholars, teachers, community and regional activists, entrepreneurs and planners who want to learn from each other and who want to make a difference in their communities. It's an opportunity for networking and discussing major issues facing the region.

Program and registration materials are on the Appalachian Studies website, www.appalachianstudies.org. Room reservations at Unicoi are available now. Contact Patricia Beaver, (828) 262-4089, beaverpd@appstate.edu for further information.

Co-Nect's Kids Who Know and Do Conference

Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, San Francisco, California

This conference will focus on project-based learning, or "instruction based on learning by doing." Eight strands will be covered, including: technology, project-based learning presentations, assessment and accountability, student voices, and service learning, among others. Pre-conference workshops on April 24 will feature various topics and activities, including a math and architecture walking tour of San Francisco. For more information and to register, go to their website at www.kwkd.net; call the conference hotline: (617) 995-3222 or e-mail Co-Nect at: pbl@co-nect.net

Strengthening the Rural-Urban Connection

From the Heartland Center for Leadership Development Snow King Resort, Jackson Hole, Wyoming

This workshop based on the multi-year project of the same name works to align rural and urban community builders for an exchange of opinions and expertise, and promotes transfer of learning based on experiences in community development. This workshop will help community developers: 1) explore the benefits of strengthening the rural-urban connection in their regions; 2) examine case studies of successful rural-urban connections in other communities; and 3) learn how to make the rural-urban connection in their community.

E-mail info@ruralurban.org for workshop and registration details, or call the Heartland Center at (402) 474-7667.

Plan Ahead!

31st Annual North American Association of Environmental Education's (NAAEE) Conference

"The Boston TEE (Total Environmental Education) Party" Boston, Massachusetts

This conference will follow four strands: 1) From nature to sustainability: Environmental education through time; 2) Designing and planning spaces for people: Environmental education's role in community character and community appearance; 3) Towards the just city: Environmental justice and diversity; and 4) Leading the way: The role of higher education in environmental education. Further information on the conference and strands is available on the NAAEE website at www.naaee.org.

Registration costs are likely to be around $200 for NAAEE members and half that for students. Accommodations will be approximately $149 and will be at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel and Towers.

To list your upcoming events in the April 2002 newsletter please contact Rural Roots at editor@ruraledu.org or call (202) 955-7177, ext. 14, no later than March 1, 2002.

THE RURAL SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY TRUST

Rural Roots

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Rural Roots is published six times a year by the Rural School and Community Trust, a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to enlarging student learning and improving community life by strengthening relationships between rural schools and communities and engaging students in community-based public work.

Through advocacy, research, and outreach, the Rural Trust strives to create a more favorable environment for rural community schooling, for student work with a public audience and use, and for more active community participation in schooling.

Founded as the Annenberg Rural Challenge in 1995, the Rural Trust today works with more than 700 rural elementary and secondary schools in 35 states.

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Donelson and Lee Join Rural Trust Board of Trustees

Lewis R. Donelson, III a Senior Partner with the law firm of Baker, Donelson, Bearman & Caldwell, P.C. and Valeria L. Lee, president of the Golden LEAF Foundation were elected to the Rural School and Community Trust's Board of Trustees at its February meeting. They both bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Board.

A successful lawyer in an influential Memphis law firm, formerly a financial and issues advisor to Tennessee's past republican Governor Winfield Dunn and an active member in the Memphis community, Donelson has an extensive professional background in monitoring public policy and government action. "Lewis Donelson's tireless efforts on behalf of Tennessee's poor, rural districts in school finance litigation make him a valuable member of the board," said Rachel Tompkins, President of the Rural Trust. "We welcome his expert advice as we increase our involvement in rural school finance issues."

As President of the Golden LEAF Foundation, Lee helps provide economic impact assistance to economically affected or tobacco-dependent rural regions of North Carolina. She is Vice Chair and an incorporating member of the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center and served as the program officer for the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation for 15 years prior to her involvement with Golden LEAF. "Valeria Lee is and has been at the center of innovative ideas for rural America, and she will bring that ground-breaking thinking to this organization as we discuss the future of rural schools and their communities," said Tompkins.

News*Briefs*

Four Ventura County Youth Earn Congressional Award

Jarthy Monterrso, Kelly McCormick (a member of the Rural Trust's National Youth Council), Azucent Ortiz and Nadia Osborn received the bronze medal Congressional Award for their achievements in four program areas: volunteer public service, personal development, physical fitness, and expedition/exploration. The Congressional Award is a public partnership created by Congress in 1979 to promote and recognize achievement, initiative, and service in America's youth. In order to earn the bronze medal award, the four students set goals with an adult advisor in the four program areas that included 100 hours of volunteer public service, 50 hours of personal development, 50 hours of physical fitness and an expedition/exploration activity that included a minimum of one overnight stay. To learn more about the award and to register, go to www.congressionalaward.org.

Youth Survey Cites Lack of Time and Laziness as Obstacles to Civic Involvement

A recent study sponsored by the Levi Strauss Foundation and conducted by the non-profit Do Something, gauged the attitudes of teens toward civic engagement and identified the issues and concerns most important to students in 7th to 12th grade. Discrimination headed the teens' list of issues with which they are likely to get involved; helping self-esteem and improving schools/education are the next most likely issues. Although the study found that nearly one-half of teens surveyed had been involved in helping their community during the last year, it also found that one-third of teens are not likely to get involved in issues because of laziness and lack of time. The study found that most teens value community involvement and feel that they can make a difference. Through further funding from the Levi Strauss Foundation, Do Something will provide $2,500 to selected youths interested in creating community projects. The survey is free with an e-mail request: mail@dosomething.org.

Service Learning a Good Strategy for Rural Community Renewal and Revitalization

Steven Henness, a fellow with the Corporation for National Service for 2000–01 completed a study in July 2001 that showed service learning in rural areas geared toward community development as an effective strategy for rural community renewal and revitalization. The study found that this type of service learning helped rural communities seeking to ensure their own prosperous future, while also helping to engage students in community survival and develop relationships with community organizations and leaders. Henness found that when students take part in service learning that is both a part of their school curriculum and the local community development agenda, both the community and the students benefit—more so than if the service learning is not linked to community development.

Henness recommends that teachers "engage students in service learning that addresses issues of greatest importance to communities." He also suggests that school

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ResourceCenter

Teacher Development

Missouri's North Nodaway School District's Professional Development Program Improves Teacher Effectiveness and Student Achievement

The North Nodaway School District in Northwest Missouri is one of five winners in the U.S. Department of Education's National Awards Program for Professional Development. Although all of the winners were recognized for their outstanding teacher development programs, the schools of North Nodaway—Pickering Elementary and Hopkins Junior–Senior High School—deserve special attention for the qualities that make them unique from their fellow victors: they are both small (269 students district-wide) and rural (located in extreme northwest Missouri, on the Iowa line).

As the Rural Trust's programs in teacher development grow (see story on page 6), it is school districts like North Nodaway that can become a resource to the organization, and more importantly, to other small, rural schools. By learning from their example, and their tribulations, rural schools and districts can undertake similar programs in their schools that will address the distinctive problems rural schools confront. The keys to North Nodaway's program—community support, teacher and school board buy-in, and administrative flexibility and initiative (not directive)—were simple to find in this rural district.

The Program

Five years ago, Beccy Baldwin, first-year principal and past student of Pickering Elementary, found her school under 'provisional' accreditation—it did not meet the standards for full accreditation set forth by the state of Missouri. Baldwin enrolled in the Missouri Leadership Academy and underwent a rigorous training program. She credits the Leadership Academy and her exposure there to a wide array of professional development and research-based methods and practices as the impetus to implement her program: a two-hour time block every Wednesday morning devoted to teacher professional development. The program works and it has the support of teachers and community members.

It is the structure of the weekly event that is most convincing. *All* teachers, administrators and paraprofessionals from both the Hopkins Junior-Senior High and Pickering Elementary are grouped into vertically teamed learning circles of eight individuals. During this time, the groups study a research-based topic or practice (determined by an annual needs assessment), discuss classroom implementation problems, and collaborate to solve those problems. Through this structured weekly time, teachers have a chance to learn, implement, reflect and model. Administrators are included in the circles as teaching peers, not as superiors.

The give-and-take among circle partners builds a level of confidence and trust, which is furthered by the weekly rotation of circle roles. Each week a new person fills the positions of circle leader/facilitator and circle recorder. The leaders receive a packet that details the activities for the session; the recorder is responsible for logging all of the follow-up requirements for members of the circle. Teacher participants bring student work back to their group to reflect on the results and to get feedback from each other.

Why it Works

Baldwin notes the importance of involving the Board of Education and the community in structural changes within the school. She also pointed out that the sense of community, which is evident throughout the North Nodaway school district, can be associated with the careful involvement of the community and the Board that had been cultivated both before and during the discussion and decision-making process.

Baldwin planned carefully, identifying the potential problems the Board might confront before a problem could arise. For instance, in selecting the two-hour time frame for the professional development 'circles,' the decision was specifically made *not* to dismiss at noon—as is typical for professional development activities. The group realized that a hardship would be imposed on parents to provide transportation for student athletes, musicians, etc. for after-school practice, events, and games.

Baldwin also notes that flexibility was necessary in meeting required student contact time. North Nodaway restructured their required student contact hours by eliminating all early-out days and adding 15 minutes to the school day. Previously, the school was dismissed at 12:30 for in-service training days or on the day before major holidays or breaks. With the elimination of all early-outs and the addition of five minutes in the morning and 10 minutes in the afternoon, both schools are able to meet the required instructional contact time.

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Outcomes and Benefits

The structured focus provided by the professional development time, a collaborative, cross-grade-level and cross-subject-area approach, and having a sufficient time block to complete the work are the primary elements to the program's success. The program has been a triumph from all points of view: the school enjoys full accreditation, teachers' morale is high, and each K-12 group has seen increased student achievement based on their intensive discussions and group work.

A side benefit of this structured professional development time for teachers is the increase in student attendance rates. Until 10:15 each Wednesday morning, students are free to sleep in, recover from the late-night bus trips for Tuesday night basketball games, get hair cuts, or schedule dentist or doctor appointments—things that might ordinarily take a student away from the classroom in a normal school schedule.

The school district worked closely with Northwest Missouri State University (NWMO) and the Northwest Regional Professional Development Center as their professional development program grew. According to the director of the Regional Professional Development Center at NWMO, Sandra Stewart, the real difference in what North Nodaway has done and what other districts are doing is that they took a data-driven approach to their professional development and used peer groups for follow-up and reflection; this was done in a timeframe that is most conducive to learning for teachers. Their focus was on improving student achievement as a 'team,' with all district educational staff being members of that team.

A Small, Rural District Goes National

The district has applied for, and received state funding to continue their professional development. The district also received recognition for its outstanding program at a national level. Baldwin still deals with problems other small, rural schools confront. She still worries about the impact of small school size on achievement statistics, teacher turnover and competitiveness from other higher-paying school districts and a dwindling teacher resource pool.

But, by involving the community and thinking creatively, Baldwin and the North Nodaway district in Missouri have created quite a reputation, as a district willing to work with the community and its teachers to improve its state standing. That is an attractive attribute to any prospective teacher, and the district is also a resource for any small, rural school hoping to improve their professional development programs.

Written in conjunction with research and reporting provided by Vicki Hobbs.

Youth, Community, School Partners Sought for Veterans History Project

Oral Histories to Become Part of New National Collection

The American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress is seeking volunteer youth, community, and school partners to assist in collecting oral histories from veterans of America's wars. The goal of the Veterans History Project is to create a new national collection of audio and video recordings, letters, diaries, photographs, maps, drawings, and home movies that tell the stories not only of the veterans who served their country, but also of the civilians who served the war efforts on the home front, and the families and friends who anxiously awaited their return. The project has particular urgency in light of the fact that the number of veterans is dwindling by 1,500 every day.

The Library will create a permanent collection to preserve these stories for future generations, and to make them accessible through a searchable national catalog, website, and public exhibitions. The project encompasses veterans of World War I, World War II, and the Korean, Vietnam, and Persian Gulf wars.

Volunteer partners are critical to the project's success. Individual partners may be teachers, students, or community members; organizational partners may be community organizations, schools, museums or libraries, or local historical societies. Organizational partners can help by recruiting their members as volunteers; providing publicity, equipment, funds, or interview training; and organizing education programs. They can also set up publicly accessible local archives for those who wish to keep collections in their local communities.

There is a special need for youth partners—classes of students and teachers in middle and secondary schools who arrange to interview war veterans and record their histories as a group or class project following the Library's guidelines. It's an opportunity for students to learn history from those who lived it—and for their work to have a public impact far beyond the classroom walls.

To get started, visit the Library of Congress website at www.loc.gov/folklife/vets, or write for detailed information on recording a veteran's oral history or donating documents. The website provides sample interview questions, technical tips, and equipment specifications, as well as forms for reporting and submitting the information you collect. For more information, contact: Veterans History Project, Library of Congress, American Folklife Center, 101 Independence Ave., SE, Washington, DC 20540-4615. Phone toll-free: (888) 371-5848; E-mail: vohp@loc.gov.

First*Person*

A First Person Account of the Rural Trust's Education Renewal Zone Initiative in Missouri

By Vicki M. Hobbs

Although unique in many respects, Missouri also epitomizes within its borders much of the rest of the United States. While north Missouri, with its row crops and flat bottomland, looks toward Iowa and Nebraska from the heart of agrarian America, the Bootheel region, with its diverse population and vestiges of segregation, lies squarely within the Cotton South. St. Louis with its old wealth and inner-city issues serves as the easternmost outpost of the aristocratic East, while Kansas City looks west toward the plains, mountains and individualism of the Western frontier.

Missouri finds itself torn, not only geographically, but educationally as well. Missouri has a significant urban population with six Metropolitan Statistical Areas, but just as significant are the 35 percent of schools and the 22 percent of students who are rural in both definition and reality. In fact, 13 percent of Missouri's students attend small rural schools, ranking Missouri as ninth among all states in small school enrollment.

The State of Education in Missouri

Because Missouri exhibits an array of both the challenges and resources evident in many other states with respect to rural education, the idea emerged within the Rural Trust to create a holistic approach that simultaneously encompasses both the problem of rural teacher training and supply, and the opportunity afforded by the application of appropriate technology in rural schools. The idea was to involve a diverse collaborative of schools, communities, higher education institutions, and statewide organizations in addressing these issues.

Missouri is suffering a critical teacher shortage in several curricular areas, but it is rural schools that are most profoundly affected by such shortages. Good rural schools find that the teachers they attract are, after intensive on-the-job training in the classroom, highly marketable to larger districts at salaries far beyond those paid by rural schools. Poorer rural schools simply can't find the teachers to hire to be able to offer a quality curriculum.

But Missouri also has a fairly extensive technology infrastructure. Approximately 98 percent of its school districts have access to a state and E-Rate subsidized T-1 line for Internet access, while more than half of all districts have videoconferencing or two-way interactive television capabilities. A statewide video backbone makes cross-district and/or cross-consortium access to distance-learning courses at least potentially possible. However, the lack of school technology support personnel, coupled with the inequitable access to modern technologies, plagues smaller and rural schools.

The Rural Trust's Educational Renewal Zone (ERZ) Initiative, therefore, was born out of a merger between the community-based educational philosophy of the Rural Trust, the needs of small rural schools in Missouri, and the opportunistic positioning of Missouri's educational institutions, agencies, organizations, and infrastructure. The philosophical underpinnings of the ERZ Initiative purport that:

- The "deficit model" of rural education—that is, that rural schools are too small to be able to offer the economic and academic benefits of size—does not serve rural America, nor contribute to the benefit of its students. We must debunk the efforts of the last six decades which attempted to mold all schools into a single model believed to be the "one best system," that is, the suburban, assembly-line model of schooling.
- At the heart of the rural school movement lies the need to rearticulate, restructure, and reinvent the policies for recruiting, preparing, and retaining rural teachers.
- The greatest advantage of rural schools is that they are small and rural. While limitations are created in some instances by small size, these limitations can be largely overcome through the appropriate application of technology. We must take advantage of our assets–not ignore or eliminate them–in the process of overcoming our limitations.
- If educational change is fostered only within the school—without the cognizance and involvement of the community of which it is a part—such change will be neither sufficient, enduring, nor meaningful

The Program

What we learn in this first-time effort to construct Education Renewal Zones (ERZ) in Missouri should be of significant help in implementing the model in other states. Basic to this model is identifying a small teacher training institution, a selected number of K-8/K-12 school districts in general geographic (or virtual) proximity to the teacher training institution, and a cadre of educational support organizations, institutions, and agencies working in coordination with all ERZ partners.

As a consultant with the Rural Trust, I found the role of organizing and bringing together this group of people for a series of introductory, presentation, and planning meetings to be a meaningful and rewarding experience. Our approach in doing so—that is, pre-selecting a group of six colleges and four organizations

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each to present their vision for reinventing rural education in Missouri—was a unique (and troubling) approach for some. Participants were not asked to submit written proposals with specific guidelines and monetary limits, but were asked to devise and verbally present the institutional and organizational innovations that they saw as most beneficial to the future of rural schools in Missouri. The Rural Trust would not serve as the "evaluator" of the presentations, but would rely on the recommendations of a five-member, rural superintendent response team to select the final participants. The Rural Trust would not serve as a granting organization, but would take the lead in soliciting external foundation support for the initiatives devised by the Missouri ERZ partner institutions, organizations, and agencies.

In a 12-month time frame starting in November 2000, the ERZ Initiative went from a broad-based introductory meeting of all potential partners to the final selection of three teacher education institutions: Northwest Missouri State University at Maryville, Central Methodist College at Fayette, and Southeast Missouri State at Cape Girardeau; one technical college: Linn State Technical College; and four supporting organizations: SuccessLink, Missouri Distance Learning Association, GreaterNET, and the Center for Occupational and Research Development. Both the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Coordinating Board for Higher Education have been and continue to be involved in all phases of planning and program development.

We anticipated that the year-long planning effort would occur simultaneously with the efforts of the Rural Trust to solicit external foundation support for the ERZ Initiative. However, the untimely downturn of the economy and the tragedies of September 11 served to bring fund development efforts to a screeching halt. Nevertheless, the initiative officially began Phase I implementation in January 2002. Phase I efforts do not live up to the scope or breadth of the initiatives planned, but are nevertheless a meaningful start. Phase I activities include:

- Identifying K-8/K-12 partner districts in each of the Educational Renewal Zones planned by our higher education partners;
- Establishing the groundwork for developing project efforts with local schools and communities;
- Constructing and meeting with school and community advisory groups in each ERZ;
- Developing initial online teacher preparation courses to assist with the rapid and/or alternative certification of rural teachers;
- Providing scholarships for rural teachers to attend Summer Teacher Institutes;
- Implementing a School Technologist Training Program that allows for the escalated training of school technology coordinators that will, over the next five years, develop into an associate degree training program targeting recent high school graduates sponsored by ERZ schools, offered with assistance from Linn State Technical College;
- Developing online courses to supplement those offered onsite to School Technologists;
- Providing training for new I-TV distance learning teachers;
- Developing the support structure to broker distance learning courses and teachers across the state; and
- Initiating development of an extensive web portal for distance learning in Missouri that will eventually include databases detailing grant alerts, conferences and workshops, classes and course offerings, virtual field trips, instructor and administrator training programs directories, and a web page devoted to current ERZ distance learning activities.

Into the Future

Beyond the scope of the Phase I efforts, the five-year ERZ plan will concentrate on restructuring teacher and technology coordinator recruitment and retention, improving teacher technology and place-based training, and developing relationships among institutions, schools and communities to best integrate technology into rural schools.

The Rural Trust plans to do this by offering innovative programs and recognizing community and school needs. We will offer scholarships for education program students who plan to focus on rural and place-based education, and establish partnerships between ERZ rural school districts and inner city schools as a part of the routine preparation of rural teachers. We will develop on-line teacher certification programs that will focus on such things as place-based education and PRAXIS examination preparation for teachers wishing to achieve additional certifications in specific content areas. We will also create "circuit riders" for each ERZ to provide direct pre-service supervision, new teacher induction support, mentor teacher training, modeling of instruction, on-going professional development and recruitment. These are just examples of the long list of plans for the future.

As we embark on this significant, multi-year effort in restructuring rural teacher education while capitalizing on the opportunities afforded by technology, we believe that our efforts foretell the mainstream future of rural education, where each community is integrally and substantively involved in educating its youth, and where rural youth grow up as the products of a nurturing, economically viable, and supportive community.

For more information on the Rural Trust's ERZ program, contact Dr. Doris Williams, Director of Capacity Building, at (252) 433-8844 or e-mail doris.williams@ruraledu.org.

Vicki Hobbs is a consultant for the Rural Trust and lives and works in Missouri.

Funding Thanks

The Rural Trust's work on Education Renewal Zones in Missouri is supported in part by generous contributions from the AT&T Foundation, the Hearst Foundation, and State Farm. Thanks to these funders, the Missouri pilot project will use technology to help link state education agencies, rural schools, teacher training institutions, and support networks to improve access to quality teaching and learning for rural children. The project eventually will be expanded into other states.

Chef Cooks Up a Community Development Harvest

from page 1

parmesan dressing, the company offers inspired foodstuffs created from fresh produce. Gourmet Central can provide a range of services in addition to their own gourmet food production, including custom packaging and labeling a product produced from a person's family or a Gourmet Central recipe to create a unique product line for use as fundraisers or gifts.

As a partner in Highland Harvest, Chef Harv and his company offer similar services to local farmers. And since the LLC is co-owned by all of its members, each member brings something to the table. Gourmet Central created 14 specialty products such as basil pesto salsa and strawberry paw paw topping using locally grown produce from Highland Harvest's partner farmers. Christie and Gourmet Central also brought their fully operational kitchen, food expertise, marketing knowledge, storage space and time—the latter being something farmers don't often have. Each farmer committed fruit as their equity share and the Lightstone Community Development Corporation (LCDC) invested $30,000 equity into the company.

Farmers also participate in the company's profits: for instance, they earn $27 per bushel for their apples instead of the $8 they would earn wholesale. One often-told story about incredible earnings and Highland Harvest involves the largest orchard grower in Hampshire County, Gary Shanholtz. He provided Highland Harvest with its first and toughest project, and in the end, both the farmer and the LLC were winners, as Shanholtz increased his profits by over 50 percent.

The first year of Highland Harvest's test run was a drought year, and Shanholtz was left with growth-stunted nectarines on his trees that were too small to sell, yet needed to be picked to save the trees from the possibility of disease. Shanholtz gave them to Chef Harv to see what he could do.

Christie created nectarine butter from the damaged fruit, and the product earned $20/bushel ($12 more than they would retail as fresh fruit) and Highland Harvest earned some admirers. "We took what was basically trash and turned it into gold," said Christie. "It gave everyone cause to say, 'hey, maybe this *will* work.'"

Highland Harvest works because it is in the community it serves and it provides a valuable and much needed resource for local farmers. The company makes it possible for farmers to take out the middleman, allowing them to take ownership of their crops from beginning to end. Highland Harvest aims to keep the county green. According to Shanholtz, Highland Harvest reverses the rule that "farmers sell wholesale, buy retail, and pay freight both ways." And, the venture is profitable. In its first year, Highland Harvest earned $70,000 and the company looks to be working well into the future.

> ***"I wanted my kids to have the same kinds of experiences in rural America that I had. I think it makes good people."***
>
> **— Chef Harvey Christie**

The Community-Schools Connection

Highland Harvest is a success, due in part to Christie's know-how, but more importantly, his love of the Hampshire County community. In fact, Highland Harvest is just one of the many ways that Christie gives back to his community, and he does this by involving them in what he does.

Area students greatly benefit from his generosity. For two years, he has held programs with the Mineral County Vo-Tech School. The project started when Chef Harv taught the students how to grow herbs using water from their aquaculture filter. He then helped them harvest the herbs, and brought the students back to Gourmet Central to transform their crop into herbal vinegar. The students participated in all facets of production, learning good manufacturing practices and price/production cost ratios. "I tried to involve the students in the production environment so that they understood what it meant to make a food," said Christie. "It was a real eye-opening experience for them."

During the second year of their partnership, Chef Harv helped the students turn blemished grapefruit (fruit that normally would have been thrown away) into profits for their agricultural program, when they produced their "Better Made Marmalade" at Gourmet Central. Students learned hands-on how to turn fresh ingredients into a value-added

Left: Chef Harv in the fields. Below: Mineral County Vo-Tech School students capping and cleaning jars of their Better Made Marmalade.

Chef Harv hosts culinary classes as field trips for local schools, as well as local organizations such as the 4-H Club.

product with a two-year shelf life, doubling their profits.

Christie also hosts culinary classes as field trips for local schools, as well as local organizations such as the 4-H Club. Gourmet Central organizes a group program for "Six Easy Bites," the 4-H project that costs an individual family $60 when done at home. For $3 per person, kids can come to Gourmet Central and learn in a fun-filled atmosphere how to make their "colossal chocolate chip cookie" and participate in entertaining activities like a pancake-flipping contest. On the more serious side, they also prepare and give demonstrations to the group based on the recipe they learned.

The list goes on. Christie estimates that over 10,000 people entered the Gourmet Central factory's doors in the year 2000, to see the gourmet food production process first hand or participate in the manufacturing process. Hundreds of those were students. Chef Harv seems to have made it his personal mission to educate every student in the county about the plight of the local farmer and the process that turns fresh produce into canned goods, creating in them an understanding of, and appreciation for, their place.

Starting From Scratch

Christie left his job as a customer engineer at IBM to return to rural West Virginia when he started a family. "I wanted my kids to have the same kinds of experiences in rural America that I had. I think it makes good people," he explains.

While living away from rural West Virginia, he learned how important it was to him that the rural way of life be safeguarded against the ever-expanding cities nearby. "Washington, DC and Northern Virginia are moving in on us at an alarming rate. I wanted to find a way to preserve the rural setting," he said.

He moved to the same area where he and his family had canned homegrown produce to survive. "We didn't go to the grocery store to buy things," says Christie. In his youth, he had watched his family can what they grew and he learned how along the way. As he grew older, he found that he had a knack for growing things. Those experiences shaped his business, which he started out of his mother's kitchen making herbal vinegars.

The company grew and Christie found that his company could help preserve the greenness of his surroundings while improving the rural economy. "The whole idea was to try to find a way to make my part of the Appalachian economy viable—using the local agriculture economy and offering local jobs, building community and getting in touch with students," said Christie.

Although he receives kudos for his business and community involvement (Christie calls himself a social entrepreneur), business lenders don't always see his community work as a tangible asset. "Even though this is great stuff, it doesn't mean much to the banks," said Christie. "In the past 11 years, I have worked with hundreds, if not thousands, of school kids ... but, that doesn't go on a PNL (profit and loss statement). None of this is equity that you can use to finance your company. To me, that's just wrong."

"One of the reasons I do what I do is this: there might be a kid out there who needs help and we might be able to help him. We may not be able to afford it, but look at what it does for us. Maybe if there is one student I can make a difference for, they can go out and create jobs or interest in the local community. There just isn't a way to evaluate that back to what that means for the county, the state or the nation," Christie explains. "We have got to support the business communities in rural America who are willing to do this."

Paying it Forward

Somehow, Christie has created a business that is both successful and generous. What created this charitable man? The answer to that is: Creigh Nichols.

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A sample of Highland Harvest's products.

Chef Cooks Up a Community Development Harvest

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"When I was a little, snot-nosed kid, living in Monroe County, West Virginia, getting into trouble and doing things, Creigh came to my mom and said, 'Look, this kid has more going for him than you know. Let me have him on the weekends at my factory.' There, I learned electronics. That's how I went from high school to lead customer engineer with IBM in five years—because someone in the community took the time to bother with me," said Christie.

It wasn't until Christie was older that he learned that Nichols had received similar help from community members, one of whom was Christie's grandfather. Crippled from polio, Nichols' job prospects seemed slim, so a group of community members raised money and sent Nichols to electronics school. Now a multi-million dollar enterprise, Nichols' company, Appalachian Electronics, employs over 100 individuals and, in Christie's words, "creates a heck of an economic base for Green Briar County."

Nichols has given back in multiple ways, creating jobs for his community and also encouraging Christie to continue the tradition started by his own grandfather, the tradition of the Good Samaritan, modernized in the movie *Pay it Forward*. The basis is simple: help someone in need, and they will help others, who will then help others and so on. Instead of expecting payment for the help, the giver expects the receivet to continue giving to others in need.

And so Chef Harv is living his adult life through his company Gourmet Central, hoping he has reached a handful of students and community members who will continue giving back and reaching out.

You can contact Chef Harv by emailing him at chef_harv@yahoo.com. To order food from Highland Harvest and Gourmet Central, call (304) 822-6047 or go to their website at www.wvgourmetfoods.com/gourmetcentral.

News Briefs

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boards and officials should "support teacher and school administrator involvement in community revitalization outside the school." For more information about this project, contact Steven Henness at the University of Missouri at (573) 882-7264 or sahfc6@mizzou.edu. The report is available at www.ctr.org/nsrc/pdfs/fellows/henness.pdf.

Earth Day Network Provides Schools and Communities with Tips

This Earth Day (April 22), don't be left out of the celebration. Go to www.earthday.net to access learning materials and tips for schools and communities who would like to organize their own Earth Day 2002 activities. The site includes links for curriculum ideas and planning for teachers, as well as "get involved" tips for communities. You can also publicize your organization's planned activities on their events calendar database.

Submissions

Rural Roots contains stories that share the incredible variety of place-based work going on around the country, its success and challenges. Stories on rural community development, individuals and organizations making a difference in education and community life, and practitioner interests are all highlighted throughout the year.

Rural Roots is published six times a year and is mailed to over 4,000 constituents. We are looking for stories that focus on groundbreaking place-based education projects, youth/adult partnerships, small schools and consolidation, economic development, conservation, the arts, instructive resource guides geared to teachers, to name a few.

We publish stories ranging from 400 to 2,000 words. If you are interested in submitting an article, please e-mail the editor at editor@ruraledu.org or call (202) 955-7177. We cannot offer payment for articles.

Youth*Council*

Vermont's Assessment System: A Fair Process

By Cara Cookson

I didn't really appreciate the Vermont standards and assessment system until I had graduated and could look back.

I grew up in the small town of Cabot, Vermont, best known across state borders for the cheese it produces. Like most schools nationwide, standardized tests were a staple in my school of 250 students, and starting in first grade I dreaded them. The tests were boring and rather than complement or enhance class, they took time away. Whatever excitement lay in racing to "bubble in" our names with a fresh #2 pencil ended as the teacher read from the faded instruction manual.

Unlike students in most other states, we also had to prepare math and English portfolios for assessment in 4th, 8th, and 10th grade.

For math, that meant identifying and assembling several successful but representative math assignments. It also meant solving complex math problems from multiple approaches and then explaining, in an essay, how you came to the solution and its relevance to your other math work—and the dreaded "real world." (We despised having to make "real world" connections in our problems because it took extra effort; once you solved the problem, you just wanted to be done with it.)

An English/language arts portfolio involved writing a variety of pieces—from personal narrative to writing responses used in other academic disciplines—and using draft processes to polish them into finished works. The student submits a self-chosen "best piece," in addition to several others that reflect different types and styles of writing. In a letter to the portfolio's readers, the student discusses how she or he chose the portfolio pieces.

Despite good intentions, my classmates and I scrambled to complete our portfolios as the last week of the semester approached, editing and organizing in colorful pocket folders the fruits of a year's worth of learning—and eluding the threat of a lowered grade. Shoving them on the teacher's desk with a sigh, we dashed out the door for vacation while our portfolios began their official duty, "informing assessment" in the language of educators.

Mysterious to me then but clearer now, it's a process with several steps. Vermont randomly chooses portfolios from every school in the state, and professionally trained teachers use "benchmarks" (other student examples that represent varying levels of achieving the state standards) to assess the portfolios individually. Months later every school receives its average score, representing the class as a whole, along with the state average. In high school, teachers grade each student's portfolio themselves and add the scores to a pot of numbers that together determine whether or not the student moves on to the next grade.

Did I like the tedious, often stressful, task of putting together portfolios? Definitely not. When I look back on it now, though, I know it's a much fairer system of assessing student progress. The teacher doesn't just see what answer the student gets, or what the student wrote, but what thought process he or she used to get there. That's important, because school shouldn't be about learning facts, but learning how to learn and how to think for yourself.

So along with encouraging state standards that guide teachers in building students' *thinking skills*—standards that also recognize that the best learning experiences can lie in the community outside the classroom—I encourage promotion requirements that incorporate a range of assessment tools, too.

This way, every student has an opportunity to achieve based on their own way of learning and applying what they learn in a variety of ways. If I can prove what I know by writing an essay for a portfolio, that should carry as much weight as a multiple choice test—it certainly uses multiple dimensions of my brain.

The good education I received in my small Vermont town—and the portfolios that were part of it—has taught me many lessons. That it is wrong to make important decisions about a young person's life based on a single test counts among them. A bad day and a bad test should never turn an eighth grader, just beginning to gather his or her identity, into a certified failure. I am grateful I was part of a system that rejected such judgments.

Cara Cookson is a sophomore at Mt. Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts. She is a founding member of the National Youth Council of the Rural School and Community Trust.

Publications

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- Start-up activities that promote or raise awareness of the assets ("appetizers")
- Activities that can become a mainstay of a school ("main courses")
- Activities that affect only a small portion of a school community ("side dishes")
- Easy and quick activities ("desserts")

The book is $24.95. To order, contact the Search Institute at (612) 376-8955 or www.search-institute.org/catalog/New/IdeasCook.html.

Elementary Change: Moving Toward Systemic School Reform in Rural Kentucky

By Patricia J. Kannapel, Lola Aagaard, et al

This book examines ten years of the KERA (Kentucky Education Reform Act) from its inception in 1990 until 2000, and its affect on curriculum, instruction and student learning in six elementary schools in four districts. The researchers found that systemic reform in Kentucky resulted in improved curriculum and classrooms. The book is $20 and can be ordered by contacting AEL at (800) 624-9210 or *distctr@ael.org*.

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Publications *of Note*

Natural History Atlas to the Chautauqua-Allegheny Region

From the Roger Tory Peterson Institute, by Mark Baldwin

Last fall, the Roger Tory Peterson Institute published this extensive atlas covering the natural places of the Chautauqua-Allegheny Region (New York and Pennsylvania), complete with over 200 full-color photographs, easy-to-read maps and directions to the 65 special places showcased in the reference guide, and information on the region's geology, weather, waterways and wildlife.

The book is $29.95 per copy, plus $5.25 for shipping and handling for the first copy, $2.50 for each additional copy. Residents of New York State must pay $32.05 plus shipping to cover the seven percent New York state sales tax. Make checks payable and send your order (including your name, address, credit card number and signature) to the Roger Tory Peterson Institute, 311 Curtis Street, Jamestown, NY, 14701. Call (800) 758-6841 or e-mail atlas@rtpi.org.

If you would like your publication to be considered for Publications of Note, please send the book, along with ordering information, to: Editor, Rural Trust, 1825 K Street, NW, Suite 703, Washington, DC 20006.

Clues to Rural Community Survival

From the Heartland Center for Leadership Development

In this new edition, the Heartland Center updates its classic study of thriving small towns, including the widely cited "20 Clues to Rural Community Survival," a list of characteristics of these winning communities. The book also includes a new "how-to" section on using the "Clues" list in community development, and a newly revised annotated list of each of the 20 clues. Eighteen small towns in 14 states are profiled in depth. The book is $15.00 and is available by calling (800) 927-1115.

Ideas that Cook: Activities for Asset Builders in School Communities

By Neal Starkman

Designed to be used by school professionals who are ready and excited to build asset-rich schools and students, this book offers "recipes" for success that will help build strong relationships, improved school environments and effective and innovative programs. This cookbook includes activities focused on learning, unique mentoring and service-learning opportunities, and activities for fun and recognition.

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Volume 3, No. 2
April 2002

THE RURAL SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY TRUST

ISSN 1532-642X

Rural Roots

News, Information, and Commentary from the Rural School and Community Trust

WHITING VILLAGE SCHOOL

Outside the two-room Whiting Village School in Whiting, Maine. Forty-three students attend the K–8 school, which has a staff of three teachers.

Small Works

Schools in Three States Showcase Virtues of Small Size

By Alison Yaunches

The issue of school size is at the forefront of education reform in this country. Time and again, research has shown that small schools make a valuable and noticeable difference in students' education. But while larger, urban schools are embracing this evidence by downsizing or creating "schools within schools," small, rural schools continue to be consolidated out of existence due to the mistaken belief that one big centralized school is more efficient, and therefore, better. The result is a large, consolidated school to which students must be bused long distances from their homes, where there is no sense of community investment in the school, and where parent and community participation in school affairs suffers because the school district is so distant.

Recognizing schools as centers of communities, the Rural Trust believes that smaller truly is better. For this issue of *Rural Roots*, the Rural Trust set out to examine three small schools and gather anecdotal evidence to identify the characteristics of those schools that can help explain why small works—and that small, rural schools are worth saving. Teachers at small schools in Washington, Tennessee and Maine believe that their schools are special. They are proving in their own way that the education a student receives in their small school is unique—and just plain better.

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Draft Accountability Statement for Public Review and Comment

The Rural Trust recently completed a draft statement on educational assessment and accountability policy and is looking for feedback from the public.

Standards-based reform is at a critical juncture. The aspirations of reformers and the concerns of critics have met head-on as testing and its consequences have become matters of broad policy

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Rural*Datebook*

Rural Trust Upper Midwest Regional Gathering

St. Cloud, Minnesota, Civic Center

The Upper Midwest Regional Gathering is co-sponsored by the Rural Trust, the Center for School Change, and EdVisions. With the theme of "Sharing and Improving Our Practice," the meeting will include a gallery walk featuring individual projects; roundtable discussions on "best practices;" and break-out sessions to learn about new programs and approaches. Introductory sessions on place-based learning, portfolio assessment, and learning community protocols will be included. Carl Glickman, noted for his books and articles on democratic schools and service learning and former Director of the League of Professional Schools; and Irving Buchen, author and researcher on teacher leadership and future schools, will be the keynote speakers.

Contact Elaine Salinas at elaine.salinas@ruraledu.org or (920) 497-3602 for more information and to register.

Youth Directing Change in School-Community Revitalization: A National Strategy-Building Institute

Lied Conference Center, Nebraska City, Nebraska

Hosted by the Rural Trust's National Youth Council, this three-day institute is designed to build a national strategy for youth engaged in significant school and/or community revitalization. Five areas will be discussed: economic development, environmental issues, state-level policy initiatives, place-based schooling and rural cultural development. Workshops will be held to enhance each participant's leadership, training, coalition-building and advocacy skills. At the end of the three days, a nationwide network of young people will have a plan of action to effect change in their communities.

If you are interested in participating, contact Julie Bartsch at julie.bartsch@ruraledu.org or (978) 779-0047.

The National Forum of the Coalition of Community Schools: Community Schools Work!

Renaissance Washington, DC Hotel, Washington, DC

This forum will bring together a diverse group of leaders from the fields of education, youth development, and community development to: deepen understanding and commitment to the vision of community schools among forum participants and national policymakers; build participants' capacity to create, lead and sustain community schools; share research that makes the case for community schools; and sharpen the community schools message.

Go to www.communityschools.org or call (202) 822-8045 for more information. Registration fee varies between $245–325.

Rural/Small Schools Leaders Conference

Renaissance Harbor Place Hotel, Baltimore, Maryland

This annual conference sponsored by American Association of School Administrators (AASA), now in its 22nd year, will focus on the unique issues that rural and small schools' leaders face. There will be keynote speeches from John Kuglin of the University of Montana on cutting-edge technology and how to make it work in rural districts and from Jim Burgett, superintendent of Highland Community Unit #5 in Illinois on effective administration strategies. There will be multiple opportunities for specialized break-out sessions, as well as a trip to Camden Yards to see a Baltimore Orioles baseball game (one ticket included in registration fee).

The registration fee is $330 for members, $430 for non-members; room rates are $159. Register online at www.aasa.org/conferences/rural/ or contact Mary Conk at (703) 875-0733 or mconk@aasa.org for more information.

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THE RURAL SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY TRUST

Rural Roots

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Rural Roots is published six times a year by the Rural School and Community Trust, a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to enlarging student learning and improving community life by strengthening relationships between rural schools and communities and engaging students in community-based public work.

Through advocacy, research, and outreach, the Rural Trust strives to create a more favorable environment for rural community schooling, for student work with a public audience and use, and for more active community participation in schooling.

Founded as the Annenberg Rural Challenge in 1995, the Rural Trust today works with more than 700 rural elementary and secondary schools in 35 states.

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Draft Accountability Statement

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development and intense debate. Both theory and practice have been challenged to live up to expectations, and controversy has become almost routine. State assessment and accountability policies are likely to be at the heart of litigation in matters ranging from privacy to teacher compensation to the constitutionality of school funding systems. And the scope of this issue is only beginning to grow, as new federal legislation increases the pressure on states to expand their testing programs.

The Rural Trust is a promoter of place-based education; an advocate of rigorous academic standards that reflect the values and needs of local communities as well as the expectations and requirements of our larger democratic society; and a supporter of schooling in which every child is challenged to achieve, supported in doing so, and welcomed into the community of learners. This commitment to quality in the context of community requires a delicate balance that sometimes is challenged by standardized testing and external controls. But accountability is an inherently desirable feature of any responsible education system, and assessment is essential to learning and to teaching. So to address these tensions constructively, we have prepared a draft statement on public policy in the areas of educational assessment and accountability.

This draft statement has been approved by the Board of Trustees of the Rural Trust for public review and comment and we welcome your comments at any time, but they will be most helpful to us if received by September 1, 2002. All comments will be appreciated and considered by the Board as we work toward a final statement to be produced over the next year.

You can view the statement and submit a response at *www.ruraledu.org/assess_account.html*. You may also address your comments to: Marty Strange, Policy Director, Rural Trust, P.O. Box 68, Randolph, VT 05060, or to *marty.strange@ruraledu.org*. If you would like a hard copy of the report sent to you, please call (202) 955-7177 or email *info@ruraledu.org*.

NewsBriefs

New Report Finds Linking Community Service to Curriculum Builds Better Students, Better Citizens

According to a report released in late January by the National Commission on Service-Learning, chaired by former Senator John Glenn, service-learning offers the ideal opportunity to channel the inclination to help others into activities that promote scholarly achievement and overcome academic and civic disengagement. Four recommendations were made to achieve the goal of making service-learning a universal experience in America's schools: 1) reclaim the public purpose of education; 2) increase policy, program and financial supports for service-learning in K–12 curriculum; 3) develop a comprehensive system of professional development regarding service-learning; and 4) provide meaningful leadership roles for youth in all aspects of service-learning. Read the entire report at www.servicelearningcommission.org/report.

Arts Education Partnership Meeting Examines Role of Art in Disadvantaged Communities

In late January, the Arts Education Partnership (AEP) gathered representatives from 11 schools across the country to discuss their strategies for overall school improvement using the arts in their economically disadvantaged communities. Diana Pasquini represented the Grizzly Hill School in North San Juan, California—a member of the Yuba Watershed Alliance, a Rural Trust network site.

Observers of the meeting found that the schools' arts programs had similar elements with proven success in their communities. Among other common aspects, their programs: use themes that integrate multiple subjects including the arts, rather than the arts serving other subjects; use long-term strategic plans as a means of coping with leadership and staff turnover; sustain relationships with external school partners to enhance the program's stability; and focus their efforts on overall student performance by understanding the impact the arts program has on student attendance and behavior, parent involvement and test scores.

The AEP is focusing on the issue of arts in disadvantaged communities as part of an ongoing project that will culminate in a manual targeted to school and community leaders who wish to learn how to use the arts as one of their strategies for whole-school improvement. To learn more, go to www.aep-arts.org.

Rural Education in *No Child Left Behind Act*

Title IV of the newly reauthorized Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA, also known as the *No Child Left Behind Act*) contains three Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP) initiatives that are designed to help rural districts compete effectively for federal competitive grants, as well as use allocations received in amounts too small to meet their intended purposes. The *Alternative Uses of Funds Authority* allows eligible local education agencies (LEAs) to combine funding from certain programs in order to carry out other specified federal programs. Under the *Small Rural School Grant Program*, formula grants

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First*Person*

A Firsthand Account of Teaching in a Small School

By Susan McNeil

Teaching in a small rural school can be quite challenging. You have problems to contend with that other schools probably don't even think about. For example, in our school, the three-story building is 79-years-old and in very poor shape. The carpet is frayed. The walls are cracked. The curtains blow even when the windows are shut. We have dust and dirt flying in our room on windy days.

We also have financial problems. Our county is the poorest in the United States based on statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. We barely have the basics at our school. But, the problems we face in our everyday teaching environment do not get in the way of education. We are small, rural, poor, but mighty!

Teaching in a small rural school is very demanding. Teachers have to be a jack-of-all-trades. I do not have the luxury of just teaching American History. I have to try to be an expert in every field of social studies. This puts a lot of pressure on a teacher. In grades 7–12, we have one teacher for each discipline. I teach social studies and have seven different preps each day. Therefore, I will be teaching the children social studies for all six years of their junior and senior high school experiences. This helps us give our students a very personalized education. We get to know our students and their families quite well. We are almost an extension of the family. And, a big bonus for teachers, we are able to carry over projects from year to year.

Being a student in a small rural school is also very demanding. You see, for our programs to be successful here, everyone must be involved. This means students have to participate in just about every activity. So, we are sharing students on the athletic fields with the mock trial team, the speech team, the history day team, etc. I think you get the picture. But, this can be very positive for a school and the students. They belong and know that they are needed and that the teams are counting on them. It teaches them responsibility. They must also learn to budget their time. And, they know that their actions and participation are important to the overall success of this school.

Why would anyone want to teach under such circumstances? Well, to be honest with you, it is a pretty neat experience. Discipline problems are virtually nonexistent because of the small class sizes. Our total enrollment for kindergarten through seniors is 135. Class size ranges from six to 16. This allows us to reach our students and pretty much mold the lesson to their learning styles.

Plus, our students are competitive and successful. For example, we have won the national Project Citizen Contest; we have qualified for state mock trial several years and received state runner-up one year. We have qualified several students to National History Day. All

Resource*Center*

Small Schools Research and In

Articles

"Jack and the Giant School" by Stacy Mitchell, printed in *The New Rules* journal in Summer 2000 is a comprehensive article on the issues schools face and how smallness counteracts them; the article also focuses on rural small schools issues. Available online at www.newrules.org/journal/nrsum00schools.htm.

"Research: Smaller is Better" by Debra Viadero in *Education Week* on November 28, 2001 covers recent research and findings regarding small schools from a variety of viewpoints. The article is viewable at www.edweek.com through their archives search engine.

"The Problem of the Megaschool" by Anna Quindlen, printed in *Newsweek* on March 26, 2001 is a powerful opinion piece using anecdotal evidence of the harmful effects of large schools. Viewable at www.newsweek.com through the search engine (must also sign up to view at no charge).

"Current Literature on Small Schools" by Mary Anne Raywid, published by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools is available at www.ael.org/eric/digests/edorc988.htm. It provides a valuable overview of research literature on the effectiveness of small schools.

Books and Reports

Historic Neighborhood Schools in the Age of Sprawl: Why Johnny Can't Walk to School by Constance E. Beaumont with Elizabeth G. Pianca from the National Trust for Historic Preservation is available at www.nthp.org/issues/schoolsRpt.pdf. This resource is a powerful argument for schools as centers of community, with a listing of policies that undermine historic neighborhood schools, examples of schools and communities that are fighting back, schools' successes, and public policy suggestions.

Sizing Things Up: What Parents, Teachers and Students Think About Large and Small High Schools by Jean Johnson et al. from Public Agenda examines the attitudes of the three different groups on whether size really does matter in education. The report is $10; order at www.publicagenda.org or call (212) 686-6610.

Smaller, Safer, Saner Successful Schools by Joe Nathan and Karen Febey of the Center for School Change documents case studies of 22 urban, suburban and rural school facilities in 12 states and

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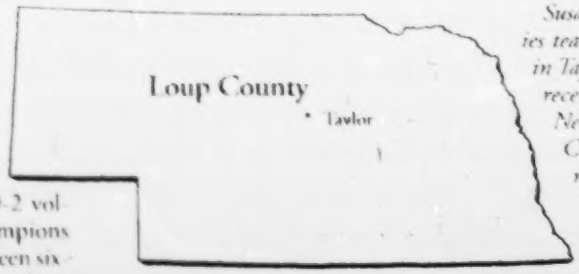
three of these contests have us competing with schools of all sizes. There are no class distinctions here. In contests by class, we have also done well. We have qualified several students to the state speech contest; we have been state runner-up in D-2 volleyball; we have been state champions in girl's D-2 basketball; we have been six-man football state champions; and we secured the Class D grant of $100,000 for teen tobacco prevention in our state. We can and do compete athletically and scholastically with the "big boys" across the state of Nebraska.

We are so proud of our students, this school and community. The support of our patrons helps us build this pride in our school. It also helps us accomplish our goal of giving a fine educational opportunity to all of our students in Loup County without a lot of fluff. We can't offer AP classes, or very many upper-level classes in any of the disciplines, but what we do offer is a basic, well-rounded education experience to our students.



Susan McNeil has been the social studies teacher at Loup County High School in Taylor, Nebraska for 19 years. She has received multiple awards, including Nebraska Teacher of the Year and the Christa McAuliffe Award. She was recently named to the first team of USA Today's *All-USA Teacher Team. As a teacher in a rural area, McNeil worries about the future of her school and others like it across the country. She asks, "Who will fill our shoes? Who will volunteer to do all the extra activities we do? Who will teach here on the lower salary scale when they can go to urban areas and make more money? We can only hope that the rural schools will not die with this generation of teachers."*

mation

demonstrates that smaller schools and schools that share facilities with other organizations are providing a much more effective education than their counterparts. The publication is available as a free download at www.edfacilities.org/pubs; or order a hard copy for $10 by calling toll-free (888) 552-0624 or using the online order form at http://nibs.org/pubsncef.html.

The ***Small Schools Directory*** from ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools includes information about organizations that provide funding, technical assistance, networking, advocacy, publications, or other sorts of support for small-scale schools in rural and urban settings. Go to www.ael.org/eric/smed.

Small Schools, Great Strides: A Study of New Small Schools in Chicago, a study on Chicago's small schools movement, suggests that even though smallness by itself is not the cure to all that ails urban schools, policymakers can have a significant impact on a variety of important education issues if they integrate small schools into a comprehensive reform strategy. Go to www.bankstreet.edu/html/news/releases/smschool.html to view the report.

Small Works in Arkansas: How Poverty and the Size of Schools and School Districts Affect School Performance in Arkansas from the Rural Trust is the latest in a series of eight statewide studies of the relationship of school size, poverty, and student academic achievement. The report shows that smaller schools and districts dramatically reduce the impact of poverty on achievement. Read the report at www.ruraledu.org/sapss.html or order by calling (202) 955-7177.

The Ultimate Education Reform? Make Schools Smaller by William Ayers, Gerald Bracey, and Greg Smith from the Center for Education Research, Analysis, and Innovation makes the case that while large high schools may offer a more diverse curriculum and more years of foreign language, math and science, they have their own set of negative consequences. Read this short report at www.uwm.edu/Dept/CERAI/documents/archives/00/cerai-00-35.htm.

When it Comes to Schooling…Small Works: School Size, Poverty and Student Achievement from the Rural School and Community Trust's Policy Program is available at www.ruraledu.org/sapss.html or can be ordered online at www.ruraledu.org/publications.html. This research analyzes test scores in four states and shows that smaller schools reduce the harmful effects of poverty on student achievement.

Organizations

Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools, a collection of general information on rural education and small schools, among other topics: www.ael.org/eric; (800) 624-9120.

Coalition for Community Schools, an organization that brings together local and national organizations engaged in creating and sustaining community schools: www.communityschools.org; (202) 822-8405.

National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, a free public service that disseminates information about K–12 school planning, design, financing, construction, operations and maintenance: www.edfacilities.org.

Small Schools Project at the Center on Reinventing Public Education, provides technical assistance to the many new small schools throughout the United States: www.smallschoolsproject.org; (206) 543-8362.

Small Schools Workshop, a group of educators, organizers and researchers collaborating with teachers, parents and principals in the creation and support of small, innovative public schools: www.smallschoolsworkshop.org.

At the Whiting Village School in Whiting, Maine (left to right): A 1920s class photo from Views of Whiting Village; *three Whiting Village School students perform in the annual Christmas play. Photos courtesy of Whiting Village School.*

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The Schools

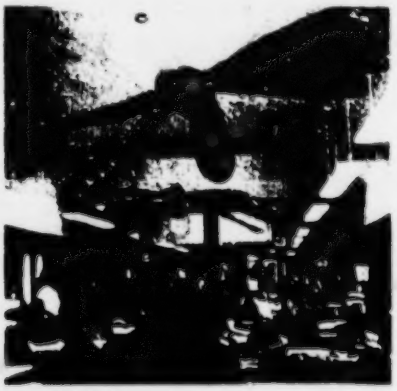
Tlohon-Nipts School in Long Beach, Washington

Grades: 9–12
Students: approx. 55
Town population: approx. 3,000
Teachers: 5

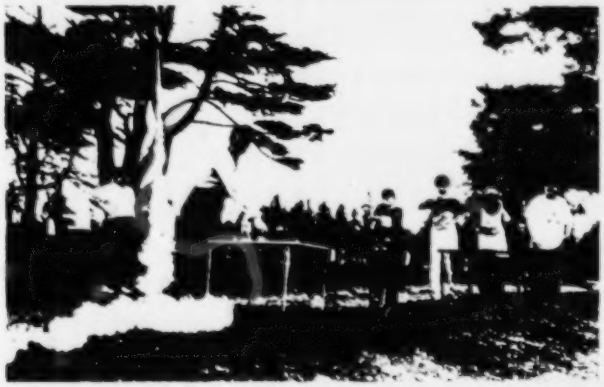
At Tlohon-Nipts School in Long Beach, Washington, everyone is a teacher. Fred Dust, the science teacher, math teacher, and vocational or "hands-on" instructor is also the principal. Although there are five teachers at the school, Dust doesn't like to classify the certified teachers as the only ones responsible for the students' education. All staff members, some community members and local businesses also have a hand in instruction. "There isn't a hierarchical structure here. We all teach the kids in some way or another," he says.

The students are teachers in a way as well. If a student is having trouble with a certain subject or idea, students who do understand are asked to wear the "teaching hat" and explain the concept. And at the annual fall retreat for seniors, when students make an individual pledge to make it through that last, tough year to graduation, they also make a pledge to help *each other* make it through.

The students named their school "Tlohon-Nipts," Native American for "those who wash ashore"—a nifty allegory for the youth—since the school began seven years ago as a dropout retrieval remedy for the district. Now hosting grades 9–12, the school chooses students from the main high school who have a need for something different. "We're not trying to be a school for the tall. Our job is to say, 'Who has need?' and then bring them here to give them what they need," said Dust.

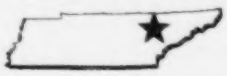


At Tlohon-Nipts School in Long Beach, Washington (left to right): Students help with the setting up, serving and cleaning up of lunch; dragonflies hang in the main room of Tlohon-Nipts School and were created as an art project for opening week of the 1997 school year; and Lelah Hogan and Christina Foster are proud of their cookie dough sales, a fundraiser for Tlohon-Nipts' senior class trip. Photos courtesy Tlohon-Nipts School.



Left to right: Whiting Village School students launch rockets for Rocket Day; on the annual trip to Pumpkin Patch Farm, students at Whiting Village School harvest their own pumpkins. Photos courtesy of Whiting Village School.

Sunbright School in Sunbright, Tennessee



Grades: K–12
Students: approx. 734
Town population: approx. 1,000
Teachers: 47

At this K–12 school in rural Tennessee, students look visitors in the eye and even smile. This fact was pointed out to Kim Napier, the special education teacher at the school, by a recent basketball game visitor who was surprised by the warm welcome he received. It didn't surprise Napier, who says that she and her family moved to Sunbright precisely because of its close-knit community—both in the town and in the school. "At Sunbright, we're people first, teachers second. We believe we do a better job of meeting student needs here because we are smaller," she said.

With such a great variance in ages, from 5 to 18, the school has a lot of bases to cover. But it is the range of ages that makes the school a positive environment. "It's such an advantage to tap into a source like the older kids. You see different attitudes … a human element in the students. Senior students told me that they are aware of being role models to the younger kids. It's great to know they think like that," said Napier.

Twenty-eight of this year's 42 seniors are graduating with honors at Sunbright. The students say that the programs that are possible because they are a small school—programs affiliated with the Rural Trust—have allowed them to see what they can accomplish in the world, and have encouraged them to succeed. "With these students, we're hearing them say: 'Hey, we *can* make change, we *can* do good things.' They are becoming doers; we're seeing them take on leadership roles," said Napier.

Whiting Village School in Whiting, Maine

Grades: K–8
Students: 43
Town population: approx. 300
Teachers: 3

When the two-room Whiting Village School celebrated its 175th anniversary two years ago, current students of the school collected photos of the town from the early 1900s to the 1980s and produced a book, *Views of Whiting Village*. The students also taped interviews with past students—one of whom graduated in 1915—for a project called *If These Walls Could Talk*. "Well they would certainly have a lot to say," said Pauline Cates, principal of the school and also the teacher of language arts and social studies for grades 5–8. "The project really gave the students a sense of tradition, with a glimpse of history along the way."

And what a long tradition this school has. "The concept of maintaining our two-room schoolhouse is very important to our community," said Cates. Sustaining the school and keeping it from consolidation has been a main focal point of the town—by both parents and regular townspeople. As one parent told her: "For a lot of local residents, this small school is the same school they attended in their youth, so there are personal historical reasons for feeling protective of it."

Students and community members in Whiting look forward to the school's yearly rituals, such as the Christmas play. "It's still a 'Currier and Ives' existence in some ways here. The village has a pond, one school, one store and one church, and the community still turns to the school for entertainment," said Cates.

The Characteristics

Flexibility

One of the most common characteristics cited by the three schools was flexibility. At Tlohon-Nipts School, Dust says that being at a small school allows him to seek out diverse learning opportunities on a weekly basis. "We organize the schedule based on who wants what activity, how we can utilize our rooms and resources best … our schedule looks like a mosaic. But, that mosaic is actually very tight, very efficient," said Dust. "There is a sense of flexibility, mobility and ability to re-

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Sunbright School students built this semi-permanent structure with Knoxville artist Kelly Brown. Photos courtesy of Sunbright School.

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spond here. If we have an opportunity that comes up at the school, we can move so fast," he said.

Napier at Sunbright School echoes that sentiment. She explains that when the work the junior high science teacher (her husband Mike Napier) does at the school's nature trail runs over into another teacher's time, that teacher understands. "Mike finds classes easier to monitor because they are small; he also appreciates the great flexibility and cooperation amongst teachers. We are small enough that they all know where the kids are and understand," she explains.

Flexibility has a slightly different definition at Whiting Village School. As a two-room schoolhouse, accommodating different learning styles, ages and grades is a means of survival, not just a neat 'perk." Each grade comes to the teaching table at the front of the room for certain segments of the day while the other grade levels work independently.

This kind of learning "sparks initiative" in Cates' words, and leads to improved vocabulary skills. "They are always listening to the other lessons; their learning is intuitive," she said. Also in this flexible format, older students can help instruct the younger students; those same veteran students can refresh their memories on a personally troublesome subject as well.

"Everyone Knows Everyone Else"

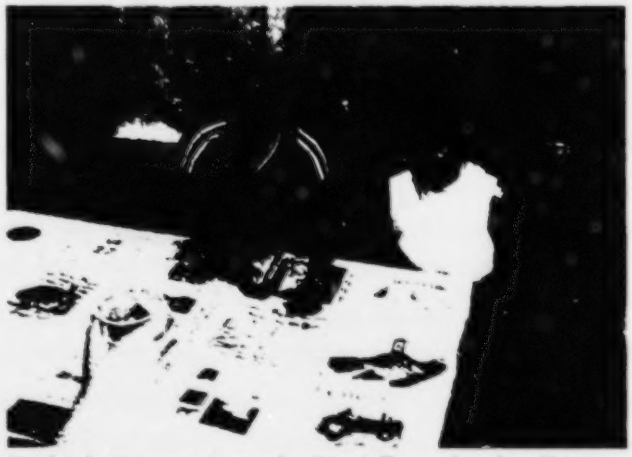
Another overwhelmingly common quality of small schools perceived by all three teachers was the absence of anonymity. "Newcomers to Sunbright will notice right away that everyone knows everyone else," said Napier. "The principal knows all of the students by their first name, and most of their parents. Students say they feel comfortable and safe here. There is little or no exclusiveness, no cliques and everyone is made to feel welcome."

Napier believes that teachers at Sunbright are better able to identify student need because of the school's size. "Because we know most members of the community, we are better able to identify the weaknesses in a student's support structure and, more often than not, someone will step in and take up the slack for a child."

Dust says that the anonymity kids experience at a larger school, where teachers teach a student once and never see them again, is not the best learning environment. "I know all of the students really well. I often have them in several classes over the course of their four years here. The depth of the relationships is so important to a student's success," he said.

The small size of Hohon-Nipts' faculty allows them to discuss each student's standing on a weekly basis. Because they have a long-term relationship with their students, the staff knows well where every kid stands. "That kind of communication is virtually impossible in a larger structure," said Dust.

At Whiting Village School, students, parents and teachers recognize the significance of knowing each child deeply.



Sunbright Community member Lisa Jeffers and student Kristy Hounshell piece together the Sunbright historical quilt. Each class designed a square of the quilt.

One parent told Cates, "Every child matters and is made to feel that they fit in. Every child receives specialized attention." The students told Cates that having everyone on the playground and at lunch together was one of the things they liked best about their school.

"Our kids aren't artificially separated. The big kids help the little kids. You'll hear them read stories, they'll help them if they get hurt on the playground, they absorb everyone into their games," said Cates. She sees it as a lesson in tolerance and compassion. "It's easy to build a sense of community within the school," she said.

Lastly, Cates herself notices that having the same kids for four years allows her to really get to know them and set goals for them on a yearly basis. "In September, there is less 'shake down' time. In fact, I do my lesson plan for September at the end of school in June. I can just hit the ground running!" she said.

Curriculum Integration

Being able to easily integrate the curriculum through the grades for students was cited as another positive of small schools. "Because we have a variety of grades, we have a better view of the overall curriculum," says Cates. "We can see the scope and sequence better, perhaps, than a teacher who is isolated in a single grade." She feels that the close communication she has with the other teachers in Whiting Village School, along with an intimate understanding of each grade level's curriculum, allows for a more unified learning experience for the students. "The intimacy here just can't be denied," she said.

Dust's experience at Tohon-Nipts School confirms that opinion. "One of the things that a teacher struggles with as they teach a course is not only the sequence—where does this course lie in relation to what the students have learned in previous courses—but, probably more importantly, how do we integrate our course into the whole? Are we making sense, does this connect in other areas to what's going on around the school?" he says. "Just the fact that I know absolutely what the other teachers are doing and we talk in terms of the program as a whole has extraordinary advantages as far as the program making sense to kids and our ability to integrate.

"I can personally attest to the fact that teaching and learning are easily integrated and connected because this is a small school," Dust concluded.

Having the same students from year to year can have its difficulties, as well. In Maine, Cates finds field trips hard to plan: while it's nice that all of the students can have a shared experience and go on the trip together, it's getting more difficult to find new things to do each year. With students coming to the same school for nine years, repetition is a thing to be avoided. Dust agrees. He says that because teachers will have students more than once in a week, and definitely more than once during the course of four years, they are constantly scrambling to prepare good experiences for kids. "You just can't use the same story or activity in another class," said Dust.

Another drawback is the amount of prep work needed, the lessons to plan and the age groups to span. "I've got nine classes to teach right now," says Dust. "Every day I'm getting five or six things ready."

It's Character Building

Not everything about these small schools is positive, but all three have found that the difficult situations they face have helped build character—for both students and teachers. For instance, there is only one principal at the K-12 Sunbright School and the demands on her from the different education levels are complicated, and poles apart. "From an administrative standpoint, it's a challenge," said Napier.

And for the students at Sunbright, dealing with the absence of class choices and athletic options is sometimes discouraging. "On the other hand," said Napier, "their chances of making the team and having playing time are very good."

Having a small faculty, while notably positive in terms of building relationships, improving learning and understanding each student's standing, can also have its negative side. "We can only fund so many teaching positions; because of this, our class options are extremely limited," said Napier.

Students at Sunbright School test soil quality in their science class.

At Dust's school, having a small faculty does not diminish the need to accomplish the same tasks that other, larger schools must. "The faculty is worn thin with so much to do and no one else to turn to," he said. "If it wasn't for a faculty willing to work longer hours and come in on a Sunday (which we just did) … well, let's just say that it's fortunate that we all like each other.

"The reality is that in this closed environment, if we have a problem or don't like something, we can't turn to someone else to fix it or complain about it," said Dust. "However, we have the option to make change easily because we have that control."

On a positive note, Dust believes that the students at Tohon-Nipts have a unique opportunity to be themselves at a small school. "High schools are pervaded with certain stereotypes of what an acceptable kid is: an athlete, a cheerleader… The biggest thing I see in kids when they come here is that they stop posturing. That goes away within a week of coming here. For these kids to be themselves is so healthy," he said.

"As a teaching principal, I'm 'neither fish nor fowl' as we say up here in Maine," says Cates. "I'm a teacher, but sometimes I have to step out of the trenches and be an administrator." That's

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not a feeling reserved just for her in the two-room Whiting Village schoolhouse. Requests for a teacher from each school to sit on a committee to implement the Maine state learning results is much harder at Whiting, where losing one teacher cuts their faculty by one-third. "Teachers here must wear so many hats," she said.

Community Schools

Whiting School is a visible focal point of the town, situated on a hill in the middle of the village. As a parent told Cates: "It's a small school and seems vulnerable in a way. It needs protecting." The town has stood behind their school and supported it and its programs through the years. "The town takes a good deal of pride in our school," says Cates, as she describes their annual fundraiser breakfast where students do the serving and members of the community do the eating. "The kids receive a lot of praise for their confidence and poise," she said. "The school is really an extension of a the larger community family."

Sunbright, Tennessee is another small town with not many businesses, but lots of community. The school sponsors the Sunbright Historical Society and also offers a Tennessee oral history class for grades 9–12. "These activities really helped the students connect to what's going on in their community," said Napier. She also says that being in a small town allows teachers to be friends to students and their parents. "Sometimes, we're the people who take them places when they need to get somewhere. At Sunbright, teachers are friends. I know in a lot of schools that isn't allowed, but here it's what works," she said.

Tlohon-Nipts relies on the community to provide learning experiences and also use the students as resources when in need. It's a reciprocal arrangement that allows students to reap the rewards of community involvement, while also allowing the small faculty to use community members as external educators. The local fish hatchery teaches classes on habitat restoration and horticulture, while an on-site child care center teaches a child development class. The school's doors are always open after-hours for the use of community and church groups. "The school is central to this community," said Dust.

Small Works

The positive aspects of small schools—flexibility, knowing students and where they stand academically, incorporating curriculum for a unified learning experience—cannot be matched in large schools, where students are a number, not a name and where the absence of community is felt strongly.

For some students, a small school may even mean the difference between academic success and failure. In a series of eight statewide studies examining the relationships of school size, poverty, and student academic achievement, researcher Craig Howley of Ohio University found that in poorer communities, students do better academically the smaller their school is. The most recent research in Arkansas found that smaller schools can reduce poverty's impact on student achievement by at least 25 percent and in some cases by as much as 90 percent. So academic research is proving what educators like Dust, Napier, and Cates instinctively know: small schools work, and they need to be preserved, celebrated, and protected.

Feedback

Do you have any questions, comments or feedback? Something got you jazzed up? Think we should cover your story? Have an idea for us? Have a rural education need that we are not fulfilling? We greatly value your thoughts and opinions. Write to the Editor at the Rural School and Community Trust: 1825 K Street, NW, Suite 703, Washington, DC 20006. Or e-mail: editor@ruraledu.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

News Briefs

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will be issued directly to eligible LEAs to carry out activities authorized under other specified federal programs. Lastly, the *Rural and Low-Income School Program*, is designed to address the needs of rural, low-income schools in the form of formula grants to state educational agencies, which will in turn award subgrants to LEAs.

Although the added funds and the flexibility will help rural schools in the coming year, the $162.5 million earmarked for rural school programs in the 2002 budget is zeroed out in the 2003 budget. Is it worth it to apply for the funds? According to *Education Week's* Alan Richard in his article "Rural Schools See Problems Meeting ESEA Rules" (March 13, 2002: www.edweek.org/ew/ew_printstory.cfm?slug=26rural.h21), Congress is working now to restore some or all of the rural spending the President recommended dropping.

If you're interested in learning more about program implementation of REAP, contact the Rural Trust at info@ruraledu.org or go to our website at www.ruraledu.org.

Special Report on Milestones in Rural Education

A new report from SERVE, an education organization dedicated to promoting and supporting the continuous improvement of educational opportunities for learners in the Southeast, documents the milestones in rural education from 1950 to 2000. The benchmarks listed in the *SERVE Special Report: Milestones in Rural Education 1950–2000* signal a significant change in research perspective or policy direction. Listed among the most celebrated milestones are: the virtual demise of mandated school district reorganization and the resurgence of local citizens seeking to play an active role in their schools. To request a copy of the special report, call (800) 352-6001.

Publications of Note

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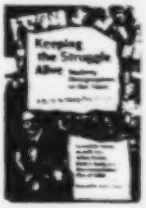
Virginia and the role of the State Building Authority in accomplishing this task. Based on technical reviews of five counties in the state, the report evaluates the state's comprehensive education facilities plan and raises five areas of concern, including the thorough and consistent evaluation of facilities and the authenticity of community input. The recommendations to improve the facility planning process to better serve the citizens of West Virginia are applicable to states across the country facing consolidation and facilities concerns. Send $10 to: Covenant House, Inc., Challenge West Virginia, 600 Shrewsbury Street, Charleston, WV, 25301 or call (304) 756-9191.



Keeping the Struggle Alive: Studying Desegregation in Our Town, A Guide to Doing Oral History

Bernadette Anand, Michelle Fine, David S. Surrey, and Tiffany Perkins

When students in a New Jersey public middle school decided to learn about their community's history of desegregation through a unique language arts and social studies project, they researched newspaper articles and historical documents and conducted interviews with townspeople who participated in the struggle to desegregate schools up North. They soon learned how everyday people become activists, how a bus can symbolize political struggle, and how the fight for full integration is never over.

This hands-on volume offers a curriculum guide for teaching oral history that can be adapted to any classroom or community and shows teachers how to perform social action projects that involve youth in the complex issues concerning race relations and integration. The book is $12.95 and available at www.teacherscollegepress.com or by calling toll-free 1-800-575-6566.

If you would like your publication to be considered for Publications of Note, please send the book, along with ordering information to: Editor, Rural Trust, 1825 K Street, NW, Suite 703, Washington, DC 20006.

Rural Datebook

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Reclaiming Our Children's Education: Uniting Families, Communities and Schools

Milwaukee Area Technical College, Milwaukee, WI

This conference from the National Coalition of Education Activists (NCEA) is an opportunity for parents, educators and community activists to connect and cooperate in working for better and more just public schools. Workshops will address such topics as organizing parents, dealing with racism and racial dynamics, and creating authentic collaboration between educators and parents. Contact NCEA for registration information and further conference information at (845) 876-4580 or ncea@aol.com.

To list your upcoming events in the June 2002 newsletter please contact Rural Roots at editor@ruraledu.org or call (202) 955-7177, ext. 14.

Plan Ahead!

94th Annual NREA Convention

Double Tree Inn–Jantzen Beach, Portland, Oregon

In its 94th year, the National Rural Education Association's (NREA) annual convention will be themed, "Rural Education: Journey to Discovery." NREA is currently looking for presentation proposals on topics such as: early childhood issues in rural schools and communities; recruitment and retention of teachers and administrators in rural areas; cross-district cooperative arrangements in sharing staffing, professional development or athletics; and successful models of rural education programs in higher education. The deadline for presentations is June 14, 2002. Find out more about presentation proposals at www.colostate.edu/Orgs/NREA/. Also check back there often for up-to-date conference information. Save the date on your calendars.

Submissions

Rural Roots contains stories that share the incredible variety of place-based work going on around the country, its successes and challenges. Stories on rural community development, individuals and organizations making a difference in education and community life, and practitioner interests are all highlighted throughout the year.

Rural Roots is published six times a year and is mailed to over 4,000 constituents. We are looking for stories that focus on groundbreaking place-based education projects, youth/adult partnerships, small schools and consolidation, economic development, conservation, the arts, instructive resource guides geared to teachers, to name a few.

We publish stories ranging from 400 to 2,000 words. If you are interested in submitting an article, please e-mail the editor at editor@ruraledu.org or call (202) 955-7177. We cannot offer payment for articles.

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Publications *of Note*

New from the Rural Trust

To order, send shipping address and check payable to "Rural School and Community Trust" to Rural Trust, 1825 K Street, NW, Suite 703, Washington, DC 20006.

Small Works in Arkansas: How Poverty and the Size of Schools and School Districts Affect School Performance in Arkansas

A Rural School and Community Trust Summary of Recent Research

This report is the eighth in a series of research studies on the relationship of school size, poverty, and student achievement in various states. The study concludes that smaller schools and smaller districts in Arkansas are most effective in reducing the predictable effects of poverty over student achievement. The report is available free at www.ruraledu.org/sapss.html or by mail for $10, including shipping.

Still "A Reasonably Equal Share": Update on Educational Equity in Vermont Year 2001–2002

By Lorna Jimerson, Rural Trust Policy Program Coordinator

This report updates a study from last year on the impact of Vermont's Equal Educational Opportunity Act of 1997 ("Act 60") using the latest available data to examine the degree to which Act 60 has improved on the three main equity goals set out by the State Supreme Court in its *Brigham* decision: student resource equity, tax burden equity and academic achievement equity. The report concludes that Act 60 continues to fulfill the mandates of the Supreme Court decision and the goals of the Act 60 legislation. Available free at www.ruraledu.org/VT_REP02.html or by mail for $10, including shipping.

Other Publications

Building Schools in West Virginia with Good Intentions and Questionable Results: An Evaluation and Recommendations for Educational Facility Planning in West Virginia

By Concordia Incorporated for Challenge West Virginia

This report examines the planning of public school construction in West

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Volume 3, No. 3
June 2002

THE RURAL SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY TRUST

ISSN 1532-642X

Rural Roots

News, Information, and Commentary from the Rural School and Community Trust

Learning and Living with Diversity in Schleicher County, Texas

By Alison Yaunches

PHOTO COURTESY OF NUEVOS AMIGOS

The group, from left to right: Salvador Gallegos (co-sponsor), Luis Munoz, Luis Huichapa, Lupe Huichapa, Blanca Huichapa, Maribel Fuentes, Juanita Huichapa, Juan Munoz, Linda Fuentes, Amada Miev and Ilse Williams (co-sponsor).

Two hours north of the Mexican border in the semi-desert country of west central Texas, the student participants in the after-school club Nuevos Amigos have become a major force in changing attitudes and easing tension between the Anglo and Hispanic residents of Schleicher County. With a population of approximately 3,000 people in and around the town of Eldorado and an almost 50/50 split between citizens of Anglo or Hispanic descent, the need for such a service was great.

In its beginnings, Nuevos Amigos was a sort of newcomer support system for incoming immigrant students and their families. It began in 1999 when a bilingual student office aide told her ESL teacher about helping to register new immigrant students at the school—an experience that brought back her own memories of feeling helplessly stranded in a foreign culture on the first day of school. What started as a mere conversation ended in a brainstorming session about what needed to be done to help new students who found themselves in a similar predicament.

At that time, students in the club took steps to aid incoming immigrant children. They translated school documents into Spanish and showed new students around the school, explaining the rules and introducing them to other students. Their welcome applied beyond the students to their parents, offering translating services for parent-teacher conferences and generally trying to involve them in school processes. They also set up a Spanish language corner at the local library and organized the first *Dia de los Niños* (Day of the Children) festival in their community to make newcomers feel welcome as well as recognize their own cultural background.

Due to a series of staff changes, a dip in the percentage of new immigrant students and an awareness that their

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Rural*Datebook*

Midwest Rural Arts and Culture Forum

Luther College, Decorah, Iowa

With the theme of "preserving rural arts and culture," this year's forum will highlight cultural heritage tourism, historic preservation, entrepreneurship, and innovative programming, in addition to a panel discussion on rural arts and business development.

To register and learn more information go to www.iowans4arts.org or call (515) 883-3729.

Rural/Small Schools Leaders Conference

Renaissance Harbor Place Hotel, Baltimore, Maryland

This annual conference sponsored by American Association of School Administrators (AASA), now in its 22nd year, will focus on the unique issues that rural and small schools' leaders face. There will be keynote speeches from John Kuglin of the University of Montana on cutting-edge technology and how to make it work in rural districts and from Jim Burgett, superintendent of Highland Community Unit #5 in Illinois on effective administration strategies. There will be multiple opportunities for specialized break-out sessions, as well as a trip to Camden Yards to see a Baltimore Orioles baseball game (one ticket included in registration fee).

The registration fee is $330 for members, $430 for non-members; room rates are $159. Register online at www.aasa.org/conferences/rural/ or contact Mary Conk at (703) 875-0733 or mconk@aasa.org for more information.

65th Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society: "The Community Effect in Rural Places"

Congress Plaza Hotel, Chicago, Illinois

The conference promises to explore the distinctiveness of rural communities and examine how they and their residents are shaped by their geography, history and culture, and reshaped by demographic, social and environmental change. Topics covered will broaden the concept of a community effect to include the link between the characteristics of rural places and a wide range of issues. Rural Trust Policy Director Marty Strange will speak at a plenary session on "Rural Schools: Small Works and Community Counts." Early bird registration for regular members is $185 until July 12, and $235 after that date. To register and learn more, go to www.ruralsociology.org/annual-meeting/2002/index.html and contact Fred Lorenz, Program Chair at folorenz@iastate.edu.

Plan Ahead!

Rural Matters: Making Place and Culture Count!

Lied Conference Center, Nebraska City, Nebraska

The Rural Policy Research Institute is embarking on an initiative to transform the long-standing needs and issues of rural America into a national priority. The first step in this transformation is this symposium, with its primary mission to help launch this national initiative by focusing on how a place-based policy can accommodate the cultural, social, and economic dimensions of both the diversity and commonality of rural America. Check their website at www.rupri.org for up-to-the-minute conference and registration information.

To list your upcoming events in the August 2002 newsletter please contact Rural Roots at editor@ruraledu.org or call (202) 955-7177, ext. 14.

THE RURAL SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY TRUST

Rural Roots

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Rural Roots is published six times a year by the Rural School and Community Trust, a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to enlarging student learning and improving community life by strengthening relationships between rural schools and communities and engaging students in community-based public work.

Through advocacy, research, and outreach, the Rural Trust strives to create a more favorable environment for rural community schooling, for student work with a public audience and use, and for more active community participation in schooling.

Founded as the Annenberg Rural Challenge in 1995, the Rural Trust today works with more than 700 rural elementary and secondary schools in 35 states.

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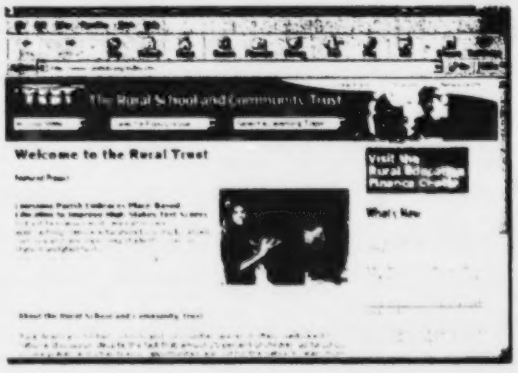
New Rural Trust Web Site Debuts



If you haven't been to the Rural Trust web site (ruraledu.org) in a while, now is a good time to take a look. The site has been redesigned with many new features to aid in your search for information on improving rural schools and communities.

On the new site you'll find Policy Issues, Learning Topics, and information listings by state—plus Action and News items, Resources, and Featured Projects under each of those categories. There's also a Newsroom featuring press releases, and a Forum where you can share your ideas and experiences with others interested in rural school and community issues. Stop by www.ruraledu.org today and let us know how you like the new site!

News*Briefs*

Foundation for Rural Education and Development Grants

The Foundation for Rural Education and Development (FRED) has announced that the Rural Telephone Finance Cooperative will sponsor its second year of teacher education grants and technology grants for rural schools. These grants were created so that the quality of education, particularly in the area of technology, may expand and improve in rural areas. The teacher education grants range from $500–$2,000 for high-quality professional development for public school teachers teaching grades K–12. The technology grants range from $1,000–$10,000 and will help schools that lack the resources to obtain new technologies. Find out more at www.fred.org/teachtech.html. The deadline for grant applications is September 13, 2002.

New Study Finds that Needs of Children in Impoverished Rural Communities are Not Being Met

America's Forgotten Children: Child Poverty in Rural America, a new report from Save the Children, confirms that children in rural America are more likely to live in poverty than are children in urban and suburban areas. Approximately 2.5 million children live in poverty in rural America. The study says that strategies to help persistently poor rural communities have not been as effective as possible, because they fail to build community infrastructure—an element that urban and suburban communities already have. However, the report also finds that the prospects for a poor rural community's children become brighter where there are effective child- and youth-focused organizations, strong local leaders, skilled service providers and well-targeted public and private sector programs focused on improving the lives of children.

The report presents four recommendations to improve rural child poverty:

- Build human capital. Provide incentives to reverse the "brain drain," train the people who are in the community, and attract people with the skills needed to help serve children.
- Build community institutions. Create and strengthen comprehensive community centers and other places that serve children and youth.
- Build the economic self-sufficiency of families. Ensure that welfare-to-work policies make the needs of children a priority.
- Build and refocus support for pockets of poverty. Target and increase public and private support to reach children in the poorest rural areas.

The report will be released on June 19. For ordering information go to www.savethechildren.org.

James Cook University Offers Online Master's of Education Degree in Rural Studies

James Cook University (Australia), in partnership with Malaspina University College (British Columbia) offers a web-based Masters of Education in Rural Studies. Subjects covered include: "teachers, schools and rural community development," "introduction to educational research," and

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Field*Reports*

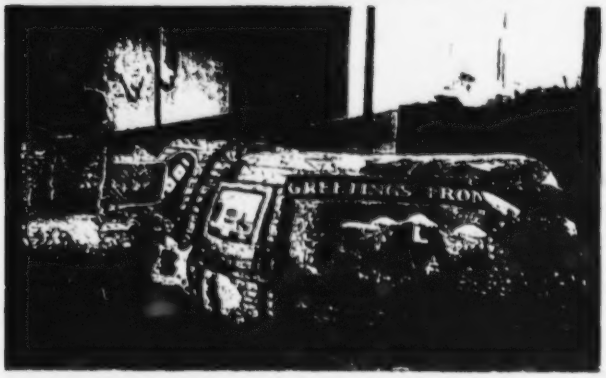
Students from Small, Northern California Town Create a Usable Work of Art

Four students from the small, rural town of Laytonville in Northern California gave a presentation at the National Kids Who Know and Do Conference in San Francisco on April 24–26, documenting the making of "**Seat Yourself!**", a mosaic furniture project created by students at Laytonville High School in 2001.

Accompanying them on this excursion to "The City" were art teacher Carolyn Carpenter and project coordinator Marguerite Maguire. Student presenters Bebe Bohnstedt, Dustin Decker, Nicole Gibson and Philip Caughron, gave a 90-minute presentation on the history of "Seat Yourself!" staffing the display booth they prepared about the project to answer questions during the course of the three-day conference. The preparation for the presentation included putting together video clips and interviews with participants which were burned on a CD and given to those attending the conference.

All 60 students enrolled in the spring and fall 2001 art classes participated in this project, which took one year to plan and construct. They used the theme, "The American Dream," and projected what they thought a typical student would be doing in several years in the form of a mosaic on a 13-foot-long ferro cement bench built for their school's quad. Because Laytonville is in the process of building a new high school, the students created a television set tuned to the History Channel as part of the decoration—with a picture of the current high school on the set. The bench will be moved to the new high school when the building is completed sometime in 2003.

Left: The students chose several different colors of grout, to help unify sections of the design. This group is grouting black over the corduroy couch fabric. Dylan Landis snapped this photograph from the roof of the school while he was working on the overhanging pergola.



Far left: The hero lounges on the couch (his head reclines on the top of the bench) with his guitar, TV, and other toys, while to his right the giant postcard emerges out toward the viewer. The mermaid's tail is coming around the end of the bench. Photo by Bebe Bohnstedt.

The hero of the bench (a typical student in the future) plays bass, and of course owns a Fender Stratocaster. Photo and guitar by Brandon Davis.

The school's German exchange student Bebe Bohnstedt helped design and construct the wave sections. Photo by Dustin Decker.

The students who presented at this conference are in agreement and adamant about the value of project-based learning and presenting a project to their public.

Decker, the technology expert in the group, said that he enjoyed meeting people from other states and of other ethnic backgrounds. "Small rural communities don't always have that diversity," he stated. "Sometimes we feel isolated and separated in a small town, but then we come here and find that people from

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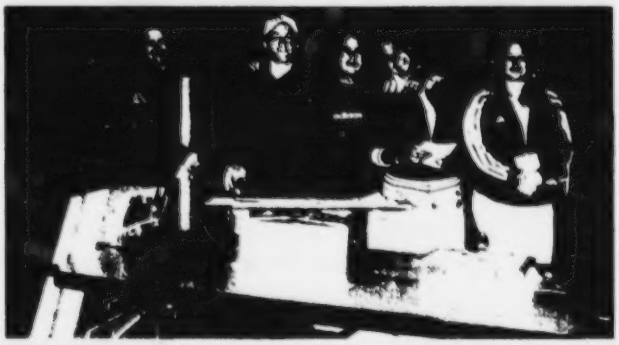
The students are proud of their work, and have finally realized what a monumental project the mosaic bench is. Photo by Carolyn Carpenter.



After three days of "manning" the 'Be Seated' booth at the KWKD Conference in San Francisco, it was time to break it down and go home. L to R: English teacher Lucy Kyne, Philip Caughron, Dustin Decker, Bebe Bohnstedt, and Nicole Gibson. Photo by Lu Pilgrim.

other countries and states are the same as we are. Presenting at this conference gave me a feeling of confidence. Adults from everywhere treated us with respect. They didn't look down on us. These people were interested in our lives and our generation. It broadened my horizons considerably!"

Gibson said that this trip gave her an opportunity to practice and improve her public speaking which she appreciated. "I really enjoyed talking to people, adults and students, from a wide variety of places. I didn't know that there were so many people who care what kind of education we're getting."

"I didn't know that there were so many people who care what kind of education we're getting."

— Nicole Gibson, Laytonville High School

Bohnstedt was amazed that "... so many people from all over the country, from big cities and small, showed a great amount of appreciation and admiration for the project we did." She said that she was also amazed that a small school pulled together in a big way with everyone working on it, to complete a large project over an extended time. "It has impressed upon me that we represent our town at this national conference."

On project- and place-based learning, Decker said, "It gives you a better understanding of what you're doing, if you experience it first hand, instead of just reading about it. It gives you a better idea of how to do it and adds reality to every day."

Bohnstedt contrasted this type of learning with what she is accustomed to in her home country of Germany. "Just plain reading a book is pretty boring in comparison," she said. "Our project really is what the name of the conference is: 'Kids Who Know and Do'."

Gibson, described by her teacher as a "powerhouse throughout the project," said that her learning is deeper and she remembers more when it is project-based. "It's also fun! It makes me want to strive to learn more."

Caughron, who always could be relied upon to give an oral report of the project throughout the process, thinks that "Most kids are visual learners and learn by doing. If we have a project to work on, we learn a lot more and it's easier. I need to see it and do it."

Asked for phrases to describe this experience, the four students said: "motivational," "taught us perseverance and the importance of teamwork," "planning skills were learned," "we learned to be quality producers, how to deal with frustration, and that the process is important but, it's also important to finish the project ... not easy in this case!"

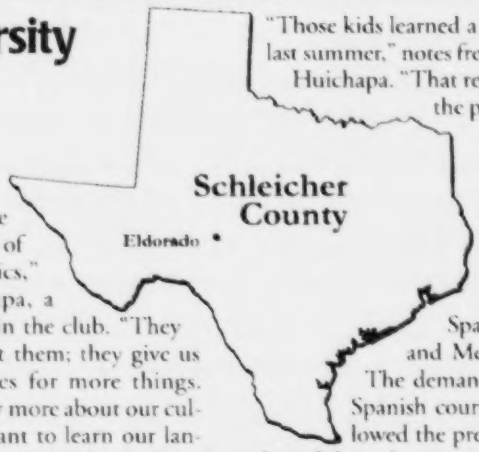
The project also addressed curricular content and learning goals. Students met most of the standards addressed in the California State Framework for the Visual and Performing Arts during the course of the project. They also met school-to-career standards by being introduced to the skills of welding, ferro cement construction, mosaic planning and installation, tile work, and finishing skills. Several computer and video applications were learned, as well as planning a presentation and speaking skills. As part of the project, under the direction of teacher Matt O'Neill, students built a pergola over the bench to keep it dry during the rainy season, thereby learning the steps and skills involved in a construction project. There is also a service-learning component: there is now a usable work of art in the quad which is used during lunch and at other times as there is no cafeteria or other gathering place at this school.

The following people contributed to the production of this article: Bebe Bohnstedt, Carolyn Carpenter, Dustin Decker, Lu Pilgrim, Nicole Gibson, and Philip Caughron. We are grateful to the Rural Trust Youth Council for their support in helping to make it possible to attend this conference. To learn more about our small town of Laytonville, California, the North Coast Rural Challenge Network, and to read a newspaper article about the grand opening of this project, go to: http://www.ncren.org/.

Learning and Living with Diversity in Schleicher County, Texas

from page 1

community lacked connectedness across ethnic groups, Nuevos Amigos shifted their focus toward linking Anglo and Hispanic groups in their community. Under the new sponsorship of Ilse Williams, the Rural Trust coordinator for Schleicher County, and Salvador Gallegos, a volunteer from the community, the group continues to aid new Spanish-speaking students and their families. However, the group's primary goal now is to cultivate respect and understanding of the Spanish language, Hispanic rituals, festivals and history, and, most importantly, the Hispanic people in the community. They are seeing success grow from their endeavors.



"[People] have changed their point of view about Hispanics," said Lupe Huichapa, a freshman student in the club. "They don't look down at them; they give us more opportunities for more things. They want to know more about our culture. They even want to learn our language… Now the community is closer and more involved with each other."

Working on a Bilingual Community

Combining two great needs—summer job opportunities for Hispanic students and the lack of knowledge in the Anglo community of rudimentary Spanish—students with Nuevos Amigos taught Spanish to preschoolers last summer. Using objects, pictures and sounds, the students spent an hour and a half with the children each day. "Those kids learned a lot of Spanish last summer," notes freshman Juanita Huichapa. "That really motivated the parents to want to learn."

Their summer program expanded into a community-wide interest in learning the Spanish language and Mexican culture. The demand for an adult Spanish course quickly followed the preschool classes, and an adult teacher was secured for those classes. A 68-year-old participant in the classes, Rita McWhorter, had this to say: "Not only did I learn to speak, read, pronounce and compose sentences in Spanish, I have found a new confidence in that I am still able to learn new things. Now I am on fire with enthusiasm!"

Although these are great successes, there is still further need for Spanish classes. Juanita described an experience in which she and her friends were discussing their lives in Spanish during a gym class. An Anglo student incorrectly felt that the group had been talking about her and spoke to a teacher about their gossiping, which led to the group being reprimanded. Says Juanita, "This will keep going and going until they learn a little Spanish."

Above: Lupe Huichapa (left) and Linda Fuentes announce the next race activity for Dia de los Niños on the microphone (activities included sack hopping, limbo dancing, an egg toss and a sandbox treasure hunt).

Right: The Nuevos Amigos students asked one of their friends, 11th grader Layna Murr, to be the clown at Dia de los Niños when they realized they would be too busy conducting the day's activities. Wearing the cap is Co-sponsor Salvador Gallegos. Photos courtesy of Nuevos Amigos.

And so the group has been part of an effort to push for more Spanish language training across all grade levels. In September 2002, Spanish became an elective at the elementary school, with instant success: 50% of all elementary students signed up, and of those, 95% are still in the program. By cultivating these programs, the Schleicher County schools and Nuevos Amigos are helping to build bridges between the two ethnic groups in a community where Spanish is the primary language of half of its residents and initial Anglo community resistance to Spanish language class offerings in school was great.

Sharing Mexican Heritage with the Community

Not stopping at improving community-wide language skills, the Nuevos Amigos also found it important to portray traditional Mexican customs, with the dual purposes of sharing their backgrounds with Anglo community members to foster understanding and of providing a comforting reminder of Mexican culture to Hispanics. Among other activities, they have continued to organize the Dia de los Niños festival and have also acted out the Posada (a recreation of Mary and Joseph searching for a "room at the inn," a traditional Mexican Christmas celebration) as part of the school's Christmas play.

A traditional festival in Mexico on April 30, El Dia de los Niños is now a new American national holiday that was observed in 1999 for the first time as a day set aside to value and uplift Latino children in the United States. Nuevos Amigos organized their town's first celebration from the group's beginnings three years ago and they have continued holding the festival ever since, with the success of the day improving each year. This year the group organized many activities, including a treasure hunt, dancing, tug-o-war and piñatas for the town's children. Many Hispanics and Anglos attended the event, bringing together the two groups in the spirit of understanding. It didn't hurt that the day was built around fun and had a relaxing tone, making Mexican culture easily accessible to Anglo community members. "The two groups were mixing and mingling with each other, something we have rarely seen," said sponsor Salvador Gallegos.

In another nod to Mexican heritage, Nuevos Amigos participated in the annual school Christmas play, attended by most community members, by performing the Posada. They sang traditional Mexican songs and offered Mexican food to help the community understand how the Hispanics of the community celebrate Christmas. "Others learned what a group of students taught them about the Hispanic or Mexican culture. When we had the Posada, we had different age groups and different community groups help with the project. This encouraged others to come see what the traditions and themes were," said Gallegos.

But events like the Posada are not just approaches to garner Anglo understanding of Mexican traditions. These events are also a means of reconnecting Hispanic residents with their heritage while also giving them strength by linking them all together. Sponsor Ilse Williams observes, "Especially older community members were very touched by the re-creation of the Posada."

Cultivating Community Respect

The group participates in multiple activities beyond traditional festivities and Spanish language assistance. As the school's "Scholarship Wranglers,"

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ResourceCenter

Diversity in Education

Websites

• The Center for Research on Education, Diversity and excellence in Santa Cruz, California has excellent teacher tools at www.crede.ucsc.edu/tools/teaching/teaching.html for teachers educating students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

• Education World's Diversity Center on the web aggregates the latest content, articles, and resources to help educators understand diversity issues in their schools and lives at www.education-world.com/a_diversity/.

• At www.tolerance.org, students can take prejudice tests and learn more about where hate groups and human rights groups are located. There is also a button specifically for teachers with resources on how to respond to particular problems and how to approach teaching tolerance in the classroom.

Articles

• The March 2002 issue of *Classroom Compass*, a publication of the Southwest Consortium for the Improvement of Mathematics and Science teaching, offers the article "Promoting Diversity, Valuing Difference." Go to www.sedl.org/scimath/compass/.

• In the October 31, 2001 issue of *Education Week*, Derek Furr's article "Leave No Child Behind?" is one teacher's take on how President Bush's education plan will negatively affect racial minority students in the nation's public school system. Go to www.edweek.com and use their search feature to find the article.

• *Improving Ethnic and Racial Relations in the Schools* is a digest from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. Go to: www.ael.org/eric/digests/edorc975.htm.

Books

• Multicultural Service Learning: Educating Teachers in Diverse Communities, by Marilynne Boyle-Baise is an in-depth look at the relationship between service learning and issues of diversity. The book is $21.95 for paperback and is available at www.teacherscollegepress.com.

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Learning and Living with Diversity in Schleicher County, Texas

from page 7

students from Nuevos Amigos visit local colleges and mine the web and other sources of information on scholarships and then share their findings with interested students in the school. They continue to aid Spanish-speaking parents with school activities, such as helping in parent-teacher conferences and translating take-home notices. As a group recognized for getting things done in their school, they were asked to help raise funds for the school's graduation party.

Lastly, they have traveled to conferences around the country to talk about their work and the difference it has made in the community. Junior Luis Munoz says that these trips have made a big difference in this life: "From character building retreats to conferences in other states, the group helped me realize what great things I can do for myself and for others."

The Nuevos Amigos students have noticed subtle differences in the school and the community at large in the way the two ethnic groups interact. There is now a small, but foundational Hispanic representation on the school's student councils. And, according to Williams, "Several teachers in school say that the atmosphere among students has changed, that it is not as racially charged anymore."

Although there is little quantitative evidence, tensions are also lessening in the community, according to the students. They notice that their work with Nuevos Amigos has helped to give them recognition in the community and it has also helped change community attitudes to be more accepting of recent immigrants and Hispanic residents. "Teachers respect the Nuevos Amigos," said Munoz. "Our group has given ideas to other schools about how to begin a group that helps students as well as their communities. As a three-year member, I have seen how the Nuevos Amigos have brought people together, most of all the Caucasians and Hispanics."

A Presence at School and in Community

In addition to helping the group work on diversity and tolerance issues in their community, one of Williams' main goals is to help the students understand and appreciate their surroundings. Several field trips around the area have proven fruitful for the students as they gain insight into various subjects ranging from Texas history and geography (a recent trip took them to the Sand Hills region of Texas) to proper consumer practices (a trip to the grocery store in a larger town 50 miles away to gather supplies for making concession stand treats).

> ***". . . the group helped me realize what great things I can do for myself and for others."***
>
> — Nuevos Amigos Member Luis Munoz

Williams applauds the hard work of the group and notes that the students' involvement has led to successes for them on a personal level. Several of them have become interested in planning for college and a number of them have improved their grades. "Best of all, when there is talk about various student groups who can help put together a program or activity, the Nuevos Amigos are always mentioned. They have become a presence on our school campus," she said.

Gaining recognition from other students and teachers as capable and intelligent students has been an important step toward improving diversity issues in this rural town in Texas, although it is just a first step in the right direction. "There is still a long way to go to make the two ethnic groups genuinely appreciate each other," said Williams. "But I now think it is possible."

PHOTO COURTESY OF NUEVOS AMIGOS

Luis Munoz, Lupe Huichapa and Maribel Fuentes compete with other groups to build a structure able to support a text book using only marshmallows and uncooked spaghetti sticks in a 15-minute Nuevos Amigos team problem solving skills activity.

Youth*Council*

LUPE Lends a Hand to the Mexican-Americans of the Ojai Valley

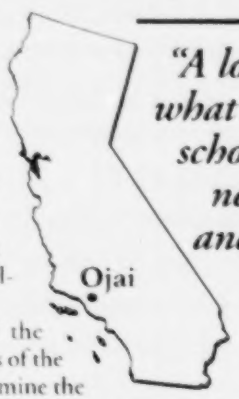
By Kelly Midori McCormick

In many rural communities, ethnic minorities are ignored and their problems seldom addressed. To ensure that this would not happen in the Ojai Valley of California, Latinos Unidos Pro Educacion (LUPE) was founded. LUPE is a non-profit 501(c)(3) education organization founded in 1995 by Adan Lara and Oscar and Gloria Melendez as a way to provide information in Spanish to members of the Hispanic low-income community of the Ojai Valley who would normally remain uninformed on a variety of issues.

LUPE provides information on how to improve conditions of life and society, with particular emphasis on parental involvement in their children's schools and education. LUPE brings this information to the community through students from Nordhoff High School, who act as interns and give presentations at monthly general session meetings in the evening at the local Catholic church. The presentations given by the interns vary from topics covering graduation requirements for students, to English language learner classes, and requirements for attending college. Another way in which the students reach out to their community is by tutoring adults at the local library who are studying United States history so that they can become U.S. citizens.

"This is an important way for my parents to understand about what is needed for me to be successful now and later in college. My parents had to go to work at a very young age in Mexico and so they have had very little formal education. Still they believe very strongly that I should go to college and support me all the way," said Leticia Ortiz, a sophomore attending Nordhoff High School.

In gratitude for the many services and the hard work of the Hispanic youth of the Ojai Valley, LUPE co-sponsors the Mexican Fiesta, which provides scholarships to Latino youth. The Mexican Fiesta is a celebration of the Ojai Valley's Mexican heritage and is organized by community members who sell food and arrange local mariachi bands to play, all to raise money for the scholarships that they award to Latino youth for college.



LUPE surveyed the Mexican-Americans of the Ojai Valley to determine the areas in which the Latino members of the community felt they needed more information. From these surveys, LUPE found that the Latino population was interested in information about how to help their children in school, law enforcement, health care, and how to become leaders in their community.

To inform Latinos about how they could play an active role in their children's education, LUPE utilized and coordinated the Instituto de Padres, which over an eight-week period covered many aspects of at-home support for children, as well as how to communicate with school staff. Throughout the training, over 75 members of the Latino community attended all eight sessions. Adan Lara, the president of LUPE, felt that the Instituto de Padres made a big difference in these people's lives. According to Lara, "A lot of parents now know what their kids are doing in school, whereas before they never went to the schools and found out what their kids were doing."

Another program that LUPE organized was in cooperation with the Sheriff's department to present its eight-session "Citizen's Academy" in Spanish, in response to the Hispanic community members' request for information on law enforcement. The "Citizen's Academy" offered classes each week in which Latino participants learned about such things as vehicular law, laws relating to substance abuse and other topics.

To provide the Latino community with education about their health care needs, LUPE became a collaborator with the Ojai Valley Family Birth and Resource Center on a grant proposal to the state of California to provide heath care information for families with children from up to five years of age.

> ***"A lot of parents now know what their kids are doing in school, whereas before they never went to the schools and found out what their kids were doing."***
>
> — Adan Lara, president of LUPE

LUPE is also participating in a program that addresses the issue of how Mexican-Americans can become leaders in their community. The Ojai Valley Youth Foundation is currently helping LUPE to develop a strategic plan which will encourage and help develop leaders from within the Latino community through targeted training. The goal of this program is to ensure longevity among the LUPE board and to set forth a ten-year strategic plan of steps toward success and increased Latino leadership.

Most recently, LUPE has sponsored the Bilingual Parent Mentor Program. This program allows Spanish-speaking parents with little formal education to meet with their college-bound daughters

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Submissions

Rural Roots contains stories that share the incredible variety of place-based work going on around the country, its successes and challenges. Stories on rural community development, individuals and organizations making a difference in education and community life, and practitioner interests are all highlighted throughout the year.

Rural Roots is published six times a year and is mailed to over 4,000 constituents. We are looking for stories that focus on groundbreaking place-based education projects, youth/adult partnerships, small schools and consolidation, economic development, conservation, the arts, instructive resource guides geared to teachers, to name a few.

We publish stories ranging from 400 to 2,000 words. If you are interested in submitting an article, please e-mail the editor at editor@ruraledu.org or call (202) 955-7177. We cannot offer payment for articles.

News Briefs from page 3

"teaching and learning on the WWW." Courses cover the particular concerns experienced by people living in rural areas, as well as models of community education and connections with community development. The degree program's international nature provides U.S. teachers a wonderful and convenient context for collaboration with colleagues from around the world. To learn more about the program, go to www.tld.jcu.edu.au/ruraled/.

Quilts Matter: The Alliance for American Quilts Resource

The Alliance for American Quilts believes that quilts tell stories that are worth capturing and that they are an important piece of America's heritage. At www.centerforthequilt.org, there is a wealth of information on the organization's oral history and preservation projects, such as, "Quilters' S.O.S.—Save our Stories," a grassroots oral history project that includes a downloadable how-to manual for capturing the stories and culture of today's quilt makers, and "The Quilt Index," an online resource providing access to documentation on American quilts and quilt making.

Center for Environmental Education Showcases Student Environmental Preservation Projects

A new initiative from the Center for Environmental Education, part of the Antioch New England Institute, is spreading the word about exciting projects kids and schools are doing for environmental preservation, hoping to spark ideas for other great programs. Recent featured projects include environmental art sculptures in Tacoma, Washington (http://greenschools.SchoolsGoGreen.org/grants/grants_comed/%2349626) and a pond laboratory project in Loachapoka, Alabama (http://greenschools.SchoolsGoGreen.org/grants/grants_intcurr/%2349451).

Schools in New England are eligible to receive funding from the Center for Environmental Education's "Schools Go Green" grant program. Go to www.SchoolsGoGreen.org and click on "Funding for Your School."

LUPE Lends a Hand

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to study topics related to college readiness. An important aspect of these meetings is the exploration of their feelings related to letting their daughters leave for college, fears surrounding the financial aspects of college and change in the family structure. LUPE interns, the Latina participants themselves, are responsible for developing the curriculum content.

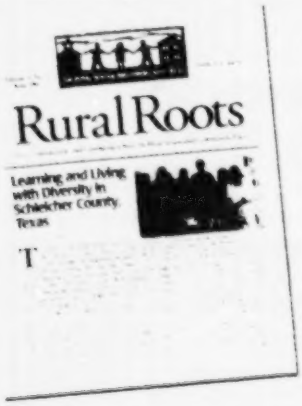
Anna de la Luz Torres, a bilingual outreach professor from California State University Channel Islands (CSUCI), feels that this program is "totally awesome." CSUCI pledges to provide professional speakers for these meetings who will present college-related information. Suzie Bohnett of the Ojai Valley Youth Foundation feels that this program can continue past the initial ten-week exploration of college preparation into life skills education such as development of home budgets and peaceful home communication skills.

LUPE is one of the first organizations of its kind established in the Ojai Valley, recognizing and succeeding at tackling the need to help connect Latinos with their community at large and also to address the problems of ethnic minorities in this small town.

Kelly McCormick is a junior at Ojai Valley High School in Ojai, California. She is a founding member of the National Youth Council of the Rural School and Community Trust.

Feedback

Do you have any questions, comments or feedback? Something got you jazzed up? Think we should cover your story? Have an idea for us? Have a rural education need that we are not fulfilling? We greatly value your thoughts and opinions. Write to the Editor at the Rural School and Community Trust: 1825 K Street, NW, Suite 703, Washington, DC 20006. Or e-mail: editor@ruraledu.org. We look forward to hearing from you.



Rural Roots Subscription Update

You may have received a postcard recently in the mail indicating that we're currently updating our mailing lists here at the Rural Trust. Please take the time to fill out that postage-paid card or please use the form below to keep your subscription information and interest as up to date as possible.

If you like receiving Rural Roots, either via e-mail or snail mail (or if you don't), please let us know by cutting out the form below and sending it to: Rural Trust, Subscription Renewal, 1825 K Street, NW, Suite 703, Washington, DC 20006. Please call our office, toll-free, at (877) 955-7177 with any questions or instructions.

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Publications of Note

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study circles get to know each other, understand education issues, find common ground with the goal of student success, and develop agreed-upon solutions for action and change. The guide was written with the help of local school leaders and community groups, and is intended to be used in conjunction with SCRC's how-to guide *Organizing Community-wide Dialogue for Action and Change*. To order a copy, call (860) 928-2616 or download it from their website at www.studycircles.org.

'If This is Democracy, then I Missed the Bus': The story of small schools advocates who were blocked from participating in facilities planning in West Virginia

By Beth Spence, for Challenge West Virginia

Meant as a companion piece to Challenge West Virginia's evaluation of the state's comprehensive education facilities plan (Building Schools in West Virginia with Good Intentions and Questionable Results—$10), this book is a compilation of stories from citizens who were blocked from participating in that planning process. From complaints about community concerns being ignored to observations that information was kept from citizens, this book brings to light the struggles of small schools advocates across the country. Send $5 to: Covenant House, Inc., Challenge West Virginia, 600 Shrewsbury Street, Charleston, WV, 25301 or call (304) 756-9191.

Learning About Our Place

From the Roger Tory Peterson Institute

The 47 lesson plans that make up this book connect learning to nature and the outdoors, correlate to learning standards in New York and Pennsylvania, and are readily adaptable to a variety of grade and skill levels. The resource guide uses lessons incorporating place- and nature-based themes submitted by local teachers. The book is $14.95 (+ 7% sales tax for New York state residents) and $3.75 shipping and handling. Order it by downloading and mailing in an order form (www.rtpi.org), or by calling 1-800-758-6841, ext. 233.

Rural Voices Radio II: Writing about the places we call home

From the National Writing Project

This second spoken-word production from the National Writing Project contains original writing and voices by students and their teachers from Hawaii, Louisiana, Maine and Mississippi. The poems, stories and essays about the rural places we call home offers a rare glimpse of America's countryside through the eyes of children—some as young as first grade. Contact the National Writing Project for a complimentary CD-set at (510) 642-0963 or nwp@writingproject.org. Find out more information or download some of the recordings at their website, www.writingproject.org.

If you would like your publication to be considered for Publications of Note, please send the book, along with ordering information to: Editor, Rural Trust, 1825 K Street, NW, Suite 703, Washington, DC 20006.

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Publications *of Note*

New from the Rural Trust

To order, send shipping address and check payable to "Rural School and Community Trust" to Rural Trust, 1825 K Street, NW, Suite 703, Washington, DC 20006. Prices include shipping and handling.

Tell Us How It Was: Stories of Rural Elders Preserved by Rural Youth

From the Rural Trust and What Kids Can Do

This valuable collection of oral histories gathered by students in rural communities stretching from Alabama to northern California, Wisconsin to south Texas seeks not only to celebrate this outstanding work, but also to encourage teachers and students to design an oral history project of their own. You'll find:

- Oral histories from around the country and presented in varying formats;
- A review of an oral history project from planning through to completion;
- An extensive annotated bibliography, detailing oral history resources for teachers and students;
- ... and how-to's from three Rural Trust network sites offering concrete tips and guidance for teachers.

The book is $20.

Lowering the Overhead by Raising the Roof ... and other Rural Trust Strategies to Reduce the Costs of Your Small School Facility

By Barbara Kent Lawrence, Ed.D. from the Rural Trust

If you're trying to keep your small school open or attempting to build a small school within your community, these 13 strategies from the Rural Trust will provide specific suggestions to help. With concrete examples of schools that have tried it and made it work and resources that will open your mind to possibilities, this book is a must-have for parents, community organizers, community members, and school professionals working to keep their small school viable by reducing the costs of renovating or building. The book is $10.

Other Publications

Helping Every Student Succeed: Schools and Communities Working Together

From Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC)

This four-session discussion guide helps participants in community-wide

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Volume 3, No. 4
August 2002

THE RURAL SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY TRUST

ISSN 1532-642X

Rural Roots

News, Information, and Commentary from the Rural School and Community Trust

Connecting Communities and Classrooms

By Elaina Loveland

In the landscape of education reform, connecting communities and schools is an integral part of many diverse approaches to improve K–12 education. Many reform initiatives support an innovative curriculum that moves beyond the traditional classroom to incorporate community involvement into students' academic life. As a teaching method, "using the community as context" is adapted into many of these different reform models, some of which include place-based education, service-learning, environmental education, the creation of community schools and academically-based community service through university-school partnerships.

A STREAMS student doing fieldwork for Crooked Creek Water Assessment.

Though the models are different, they share a belief that K–12 education needs to include real-life experience and use the community as context for learning. This underlying common attitude echoes the words of nineteenth century educator John Dewey:

> From the standpoint of the child, the great waste in the school comes from his inability to utilize the experiences he gets outside the school in any complete and free way within the school itself; while, on the other hand, he is unable to apply in daily life what he is learning in school. That is the isolation of the school, its isolation from life.[1]

[1] John Dewey, *School and Society*, in Martin Dworkin, ed., *Dewey on Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1959), p. 76–78.

A STREAMS student shows a survey analysis of her independent study.

Quite a few education reform initiatives seek to reconnect schools to real-life learning experiences, by using the community as context as a way to connect community and the classroom. Several organizations have emerged as leaders in this approach.

Service-Learning

Service-learning—when students serve others as part of their core education—is one of the better known terms in community-connected education reform. Activities such as volunteering and doing community service projects are key components of service-learning.

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Rural*Datebook*

Rural Matters: Making Place and Culture Count!

Lied Conference Center, Nebraska City, Nebraska

The Rural Policy Research Institute is embarking on an initiative to transform the long-standing needs and issues of rural America into a national priority. The first step in this transformation is this symposium, which will focus on how a place-based policy can accommodate the diverse cultural, social, and economic dimensions of rural communities. Check the RUPRI Web site at www.rupri.org for up-to-the-minute conference and registration information.

94th Annual NREA Convention

Double Tree Inn–Jantzen Beach, Portland, Oregon

"Rural Education: Journey to Discovery" is the theme of the National Rural Education Association's (NREA) annual convention, co-hosted by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL). Speakers include Michael Umphrey, founding director for the Montana Heritage Project, and Dr. Elaine Johnson, director of MBM Associates, a consulting group that achieves results in educational and business settings by applying the principles that characterize all living systems. The Rural School and Community Trust will be coordinating a research symposium at the conference that will explore the latest in rural education research topics such as school finance and school facilities. To obtain more information about the convention, please visit the NREA on the Internet at http://www.nrea.net/.

24th Annual Rural Education and Small Schools Conference

Holiday Inn, Manhattan, KS

Sponsored by the Kansas State University Center for Rural Education and Small Schools and the College of Education, the 24th Annual Rural Education and Small Schools Conference is designed to highlight exemplary programs and research involving rural and small schools. Topics for discussion include educational leadership, school-to-work, standards-based education, educational technology, enhancing learning and student achievement, cultural and language diversity, and connecting with the community. A conference brochure with registration information can be downloaded from the following Web site: http://coe.ksu.edu/cress/conference.htm.

To list your upcoming events in the October 2002 newsletter, please contact Rural Roots at editor@ruraledu.org or call (202) 955-7177, ext. 14.

Submissions

Rural Roots contains stories that share the incredible variety of place-based work going on around the country, its successes and challenges. Stories on rural community development, individuals and organizations making a difference in education and community life, and practitioner interests are all highlighted throughout the year.

Rural Roots is published six times per year and is distributed to more than 6,000 constituents. We encourage stories that focus on groundbreaking place-based education projects, youth-adult partnerships, small schools and consolidation, economic development, conservation, the arts, and instructive resource guides geared to teachers, to name a few.

We publish stories ranging from 400 to 2,000 words. If you are interested in submitting an article, please e-mail the editor at editor@ruraledu.org or call (202) 955-7177. We cannot offer payment for articles.

THE RURAL SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY TRUST

Rural Roots

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Rural Roots is published six times per year by the Rural School and Community Trust, a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to enlarging student learning and improving community life by strengthening relationships between rural schools and communities and engaging students in community-based public work.

Through advocacy, research, and outreach, the Rural Trust strives to create a more favorable environment for rural community schooling, for student work with a public audience and use, and for more active community participation in schooling.

Founded as the Annenberg Rural Challenge in 1995, the Rural Trust today works with more than 700 rural elementary and secondary schools in 35 states.

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GrantsWatch

Grant: *Teaching Tolerance*
Funder: *Southern Poverty Law Center*
Deadline: *Ongoing*

"Teaching Tolerance" grants of up to $2,000 are available to K–12 teachers from the Teaching Tolerance project of the Southern Poverty Law Center, a nonprofit group that fights discrimination. The grants are awarded for activities promoting diversity, peacemaking, community service, or other aspects of tolerance education. Requests should include a typed, 500-word description of the activity and the proposed budget. Application deadline: ongoing. For more information, visit http://www.teachingtolerance.org.

Grant: *Professional Development*
Funder: *NEA Foundation*
Deadline: *Ongoing*

The NEA Foundation makes $1,000–$3,000 grants to practicing U.S. public school teachers in grades K–12, public school education support professionals, and higher education faculty and staff at U.S. public colleges and universities. **All applicants must read and follow the grant guidelines.** Eligible applicants may submit a proposal at any time. Notification will be made within seven months of receipt of the application. For more information, visit http://www.nfie.org/programs/howtoapply.htm.

Grant: *Environmental Education*
Funder: *PG&E*
Deadline: *September 30, 2002*

PG&E National Energy Group is accepting applications for its annual Environmental Education Grant Program. Grants ranging from $5,000 to $10,000 will be awarded for innovative programs that encourage and support educating young people about the environment. Those eligible to apply for grants include elementary, middle and high schools and nonprofit organizations that are engaged in educational projects related to earth science, conservation and the environment. Teacher training programs with hands-on student activities that focus on earth science and environmental education projects also can qualify. Application deadline: September 30, 2002. http://www.neg.pge.com/grantFAQ.html.

Grant: *At-risk Youth*
Funder: *Handspring Foundation*
Deadline: *November 1, 2002*

The Handspring Foundation makes cash grants from $1,000 to $25,000 for projects that focus on preK–12 education or other issues directly related to at-risk children and youth. Preference is given to organizations with a strong underserved outreach component. The Foundation is particularly interested in programs directed toward literacy; mentoring and peer counseling; school-based programs that target high-risk youth; after school programs targeting high-risk youth that utilize arts, technology, and sports; services to children in foster care or juvenile facilities; prevention, education, and early intervention services related to children's health; direct services for children who have been neglected and/or abused; and homeless assistance programs for families with children. Applications are reviewed quarterly. The next application deadline is November 1 for notification by the 15th of the following month. Visit http://www.handspring.com/company/foundation/about.jhtml for more information.

Grant: *School Reform and Community Initiatives*
Funder: *Braitmayer Foundation*
Deadline: *November 15, 2002*

The Braitmayer Foundation supports organizations and programs from across the U.S. that enhance the education of K–12 children. The foundation is particularly interested in curricular and school reform initiatives, professional development opportunities for teachers, and local community efforts that increase educational opportunities for students. This foundation prefers to award seed grants, challenge grants, or to match other grants. Grant requests of up to $10,000 should be submitted by November 15. For more information, visit http://www.braitmayerfoundation.org/.

NewsBriefs

Rural Trust Receives $115,000 to Promote Youth Civic Engagement

Twenty-two rural high schools in Alabama, Ohio, Nebraska, Vermont, South Dakota and North Carolina will participate in "Project 540," a national high school civic engagement initiative funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts. The Rural Trust is one of 10 grantees selected out of 72 proposals—the only totally rural and the only national program funded. The project, reaching 100,000 students in 250 high schools across the country, is part of Pew's six-year effort to increase the civic engagement of Americans between the ages of 15 and 22. It brings students, teachers, and administrators together to explore how high schools can become better platforms for young people to get involved in the public life of their communities. Providence College will coordinate the initiative.

During Project 540, students will identify the social issues they really care about via student-led dialogue groups, and examine the current landscape in their high school for student civic engagement opportunities. Through dialogue, students will map out existing opportunities for everyone in the school to learn, understand and appreciate what their school and community have to offer. Then they will create recommendations to enhance their opportunities for community involvement. Online activities, including small group dialogues between students in different schools, will be facilitated by New York City-based Web Lab.

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FieldReports

Community Collaboration for Place-based Studies Celebrates Local Natural and Cultural History

By June LaCombe

Editor's Note: *In this article, author June LaCombe revisits a community-wide place-based education project undertaken in the rural Maine town of Pownal in 1995 to see what, if anything, remains of the exciting work done by teachers, students, and community members that year. Her findings, seven years later, show parts of the year-long project still in use in the K-8 school and other parts of the program now a permanent part of the school's budget. Most importantly, she gains a new appreciation of the importance of the students' work documenting a rural community's culture, resources, and history—a record of a town that lives on even after the death of town elders, the crumbling of historic structures, and the other inevitable changes that come with time.*

This is the story of a school-wide curriculum project in Pownal, Maine that fostered intergenerational learning, student-centered inquiry, community service, and place-based education. It was a collaborative effort by students, teachers, parents, and community members to learn about the natural and cultural history of their town. When a teacher proposed developing a community resources directory to a local school foundation, the *process* of developing the product became much more than anyone had anticipated and touched the lives of many in a rural community. This project may act as a model for other communities who want to venture beyond the walls of the classroom and reinforce academics with experience.

Though just inland from Freeport and 30 minutes from Portland, Maine, Pownal remains a small rural town with farms, forests and streams. It has a population of about 1,200 people and one school, grades K-8, with fewer than 160 students. A state park, wetlands and streams, abandoned feldspar quarries, historic architecture, and forests are within its borders. The rural environment has attracted naturalists, photographers, historians, poets and other valuable resource people to the community, and there is a depth of knowledge held by long-term residents and the large elderly population. Resources abound, but how do teachers access these resources and integrate them with ongoing academic studies?

A seed took hold with one teacher's request to the local Pownal School Foundation to support a community resource directory. Recognizing the difficulty of funding school programs with taxes alone, this local foundation raises money for specific programs proposed by teachers and supported by the administration and school board. The Foundation's guidelines favor innovative experiential education that impacts all grade levels, uses resources wisely, encourages student involvement, and improves community collaboration with the school. With hearty discussion all started to envision a demonstration project that would identify local resources and integrate the school and community as a learning center. Classes would venture into the community and actively study a range of local natural and cultural history topics applying academic skills and generate a directory as a result. A member of the Foundation volunteered to oversee the project, facilitate teacher workshops, and work with the school's volunteer coordinator to orchestrate details.

Multifaceted objectives emerged from workshops with teachers: Students were to help define the areas of study and pursue areas of interest through self-directed inquiry projects. Each area of study was to contribute in some way to the community either through public service or research. Teachers would act as facilitators and co-learners as they explored new areas. Students were to develop an awareness and appreciation for their own community's cultural and natural history through active hands-on field experiences. And resource people on both the state and community levels would share their knowledge and enthusiasm in their area of expertise with students.

The Maine Community Foundation awarded a $2,500 grant to the Pownal Foundation to pay stipends for guest instructors, supplementary curriculum materials, admission fees, bus drivers, substitute teachers, and other direct expenses. The teachers and students renamed the community resources project Pownal Presents! and finalized each grade's area of inquiry. All topics supplemented the ongoing units of study for each particular grade. The exciting culminating event was a school-wide open house (replacing the science fair that year) in which

Ornithologist mist-netting and banding birds in school yard (3rd Grade).

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the students shared information and resources with the community. The all-curriculum fair, Pownal Presents! celebrated the natural and cultural history of this small rural town.

The Maine Historical Society, Maine Audubon Society, Greater Portland Landmarks, and University of Maine helped identify state-wide resource people. They helped compile field experiences, research logistics and identify leaders and volunteers. Supplementary curriculum materials were gathered for each unit. Resource directory notebooks that could be expanded and revised were compiled for each class. The project coordinator conducted workshops on working with children outdoors and inquiry-based learning. But the project's greatest strength became clear as the classes started involving local community members.

Community newspapers, school newsletters and notes to parents invited people to share resources and volunteer time to work with students. Townspeople were asked if they knew others who might be interested. As publicity continued, the list of participants grew. Wildflower enthusiasts invited children to walk through their woodlands and meadows. People who had attended Pownal's one-room schoolhouses agreed to be "interviewed" by first and second graders. Those with mineral collections offered to bring them to the school and help lead geology field trips. Post-and-beam builders volunteered to do talks in some of Pownal's barns.

For a month in the spring of 1995, the walls of the school dissolved. The following profile shows only a few examples of what each class did as a part of its unit with the help of local and state-wide resource people.

Kindergarten: Wildflowers

• The Kindergarten class took wildflower walks in the community with the director of the New England Wildflower Society and local naturalists.

• For the open house students wore flower costumes with headdresses and each adopted wildflower names.

• Community members' collections of wildflower books and prints were on display along with student drawings of wildflowers.

Grades One and Two: One-Room Schools

• Multi-age classes visited Washburn-Norlands Living History Center, participating in a day of farm life from the late 1800s.

• Young students interviewed elders in the town about the games and lessons they remembered from Pownal's one-room schoolhouses. One student recalled proudly: "My grandmother went to school in Pownal. She rode in a sleigh to school in the winter and had to walk the rest of the time."

Hawk watch from top of Bradbury Mountain (7th Grade).

• Parent volunteers and students reconstructed a one-room schoolhouse in the hallway of the school and conducted "lessons" during the Open House. Visitors listened to recordings of the elders who had attended Pownal's one-room schools. Recordings were later donated to the Historical Society.

Third Grade: Pownal's Birds

• Mist-netting birds on the school grounds with an ornithology professor from Bowdoin College was a highlight of the third grade study.

• Local naturalists led bird walks and showed slides of the region's common birds.

• Students constructed birdhouses and established a bluebird trail on the school grounds. A year later a student excitedly announced: "A bluebird nested in the birdhouse we made."

• Students quizzed their parents and visitors during the Open House and introduced lessons with slides and birdsong recordings. Sculpted birds hung from the ceiling and paintings of imaginary birds adorned the walls.

Fourth Grade: Wetlands

• The fourth grade canoed on Pownal's Runaround Pond exploring beaver lodges and muskrat mounds.

• Students did a transect study of a local bog with the director of the Chewonki Foundation. One student seemed to speak for the group when she exclaimed: "I loved going to the bog in Pownal ... I never *knew there was* a bog in Pownal!"

• One group of students mapped the region's watershed. Others mapped the various brooks, streams, and bogs of Pownal.

• Each student did a report and art project on a plant or animal from the wetlands.

• For the Open House they created posters on why wetlands are important and displayed reports and artwork of wetland wildlife.

Fifth Grade: Geology and Quarries

• The fifth grade visited feldspar mines with community members who belong to the Maine Mineral Society.

• They toured granite quarries with Frank Knight who had worked summers cutting granite while attending college 50 years before, and then visited the unique Cribstone Bridge made with Pownal's granite between Orr's and Bailey Islands. Later they recalled: "Going to that bridge was cool. They should have a sign that says that the granite was from Pownal."

• Students collected photographs of buildings throughout the region made from Pownal's granite.

• Students mapped the historic quarries and mines of Pownal and the maps were added to the resource files.

• A grandparent gave a granite-splitting demonstration at the Open House where student and community collections of minerals were on display.

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Connecting Communities and Classrooms

from page 1

which aims to make students better citizens. As a teaching method, it has grown exponentially in the past decade. Since the Corporation for National and Community Service was founded in 1993, $43 million in federal funding has been awarded to school districts across the nation to incorporate service-learning into curricula.

The term "service-learning" was coined in 1969. Betsey McGee, director of the National Service-Learning Partnership at the Academy for Educational Development in New York City, calls service-learning "a pedagogy of choice" for both place-based learning and community schools. "By definition, service-learning is place-based since most service is done in the place students live," she said.

The National Service-Learning Partnership, founded in 2001, currently has more than 2000 members. The partnership primarily supports leaders and advocates and aims to make service-learning a core part of every child's education. The establishment of this organization is one more indication that service-learning is here to stay.

Expanding Environmental Education

In its eighth year, the State Education and Environment Roundtable (SEER) is a coalition of 16 state education agencies that has developed a model to improve student achievement called Environment as an Integrating Context (EIC).

The EIC model goes beyond what many people think of as traditional environmental education. EIC's approach to learning is not designed only to incorporate environmental issues into the curriculum; rather, it is the impetus with which they engage students to connect learning to their local environment. SEER Director Gerald Lieberman defines environment as encompassing both the "natural *and* community surroundings."

SEER works with state education agencies to implement the EIC model in schools. This year, SEER has a total of 82 EIC schools in 12 states: California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Maryland, Minnesota, Massachusetts, New Jersey, South Carolina, Texas and Washington.

The EIC approach is based on research that the group's staff has conducted in schools over the last eight years. One of these schools was Huntingdon Area Middle School in rural south central Pennsylvania.

In 1991, two of the school's teachers, Frederic Wilson and Timothy Julian noticed that students had a lot of "down time" during study halls.

"We realized that traditional curriculum was disconnected from the real world of young people in this rural community and that students are more engaged in activities that take place outdoors, have a direct impact on their families and community, and give them some control over their educational experience," Wilson said.

To remedy students' ennui during study halls, Wilson and Julian began a supplemental study in environmental ecology. Students were eager to participate and shortly thereafter, the interdisciplinary program, Science Teams in Rural Environments for Aquatic Management Studies (STREAMS), was integrated into the sixth grade curriculum. Through experiments and outdoor fieldwork, STREAMS students study topics such as storm water run-off, erosion, sedimentation, nutrient enrichment, wetlands, groundwater, and the effects on waterways of acidity and household pollutants.

STREAMS is a unique learning program because it combines four academic disciplines (language arts, math, science and social studies) with an after school Environmental Club that students can join after they have completed the core curriculum. The club has approximately 60 students per year in sixth through eighth grade. Wilson, the faculty advisor, said that many students in high school often come back to participate in community service projects.

Huntingdon Area Middle School's STREAMS and Environmental Club have had tremendous success over the last several years. After discovering during fieldwork that a sewage leak was polluting a local stream, the middle-schoolers launched a three-year campaign to correct the problem. The students wrote a grant proposal and obtained $250,000 to replace three miles of broken sewage line. The good work

Principles of Place-Based Education

Place-based education, as practiced by more than 700 schools associated with the Rural School and Community Trust, embraces the following six principles:

- The school and community actively collaborate to make the local place a good one in which to learn, work, and live.
- Students do sustained academic work that draws upon and contributes to the place in which they live. They practice new skills and responsibilities, serving as scholars, workers, and citizens in their community.
- Schools mirror the democratic values they seek to instill, arranging their resources so that every child is known well and every child's participation, regardless of ability, is needed and wanted.
- Decision-making about the education of the community's children is shared, informed by expertise both in and outside the school.
- All participants, including teachers, students, and community members, expect excellent effort from each other and review their joint progress regularly and thoughtfully. Multiple measures and public input enlarge assessments of student performance.
- The school and community support students, their teachers, and their adult mentors in these new roles.

did not stop there. Students also assisted in designing, funding and constructing a wetland on school property to reduce problems with storm water runoff in the community. They created and distributed a publication on household pollutants; started a school recycling program; and provided data for a county water-quality study. The students provided research and offered suggestions that resulted in a 50 percent reduction in food waste at their school as well as significant reductions in other district schools. One of the most recent STREAMS projects was the Sanding Stone Creek Water Assessment. This past April, the Huntington students earned a Presidential Environment Youth Award for their achievements. The STREAMS program and Environmental Club demonstrate what K–12 students can do given the opportunity—not bad for a program that started during study hall.

Community Schools

Establishing schools that bridge a student's academic environment and a community's social environment to serve as a dual center for learning and community enrichment is the goal of the Coalition for Community Schools in Washington, DC. The Coalition is an alliance of more than 170 education, youth development, family support, health and human services, and community development organizations including the Rural Trust, that promote full-service community schools where educators and communities collaborate to support student learning. Community schools typically combine the assets of a community and local school to provide better learning opportunities for families as well as students. Many community schools are open after normal school hours to provide additional services to students and families. Most community schools integrate community-oriented service-learning into the academic curriculum to enhance students' education.

"We want build a united movement for community schools," said Martin Blank, director the Coalition for Community Schools. "There are a variety of models of what a community school is,

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ResourceCenter

Connecting Communities and Classrooms

Periodicals

- "Place-Based Education: Learning to Be Where We Are" by Gregory Smith appeared in the April 2002 issue of *Phi Delta Kappan*.
- "Community Schools" by Ira Harkavy and Martin Blank appeared in the April 17, 2002 issue of *Education Week*.
- *Community Service Journal* is published three times a year in support of teaching practices that build community. It showcases innovative educational strategies, practices, and curriculum that involve teachers and students in meaningful work within their communities. More information about the journal is available at http://www.vermontcommunityworks.org/cwpublications/journal/cwjournal.html.

Books, Reports and Presentations

- *Place Value: An Educator's Guide to Good Literature on Rural Lifeways, Environments, and Purposes of Education* by Toni Haas and Paul Nachtigal can be purchased for $12.00 from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools. Order information is available at http://www.ael.org/eric/orderf.htm.
- *100 Days of Learning in Place: How a Small School Utilized 'Place-Based' Learning to Master State Academic Standards* by James Lewicki is available for $5.00 from the Rural School and Community Trust and can be ordered by filling out an order form at http://www.ruraledu.rog/pub_order.html.
- *Learning In Deed: The Power of Service-Learning for American Schools* is a report that was released in January 2002 by the National Commission on Service Learning. It is available on the Web at http://www.service-learningpartnership.org/.
- *Service-Learning: A Movement's Pioneers Reflect on Its Origins, Practice and Future* by Timothy K. Stanton, Dwight E. Giles and Nadinne I. Cruz is available at bookstores nationwide.
- *Inside Full-Service Community Schools* by Sue Maguire and Joy G. Dryfoos is available at bookstores nationwide.
- "Contextual Teaching and Learning Strategies in High Schools: Developing a Vision for Support and Evaluation" was presented by Elliott Merdrich, Sarah Calerdon, and Gary Hoachlander of MPR Associates at the Roundtable on Instructional Strategies and Structures for Improved Learning in High Schools in Washington, DC in July. Call (202) 973-0244 to obtain information on how to obtain a copy.

Organization Web Sites

- Corporation for National and Community Service: **http://www.nationalservice.org**
- National Service Learning Clearinghouse: **http://www.servicelearning.org/index.html**
- Rural School and Community Trust: **http://www.ruraledu.org/index.cfm**
- The Orion Society: **http://www.orionsociety.org**

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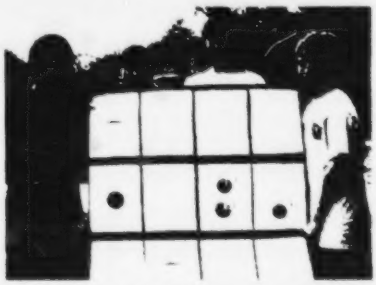

Left: Raymond Green, senior at University High School, sells fresh fruits and vegetables at the Farmer's Market, part of the University Nutrition Initiative. Above: STREAMS students participate in a wetland study.

Connecting Communities and Classrooms

from page 7

but there are common underlying core principles. We want to promote community schools on a large scale and weave together the best aspects of different models."

The Coalition of Community Schools emphasizes the development of programs and services in five areas: quality education, youth development, family support, family and community engagement, and community development. Service-learning is a key element at the intersection between quality education, youth development and community development.

One such school is the O'Farrell Community School for Advanced Academic Studies in San Diego, California, a charter school established in 1990. The school serves 1,500 sixth to eighth grade middle school students and features additional services beyond the traditional classroom setting that serve the community on-site. The school is open from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., much longer than the traditional school day to accommodate a variety of services for students and parents.

A unique aspect of the O'Farrell Community School is the social service wing on campus called Family Support Services, a collaborative effort between the County of San Diego, Heath and Human Services Agency, O'Farrell Community School and SAY San Diego. Twenty-five community partners come to the school to offer a wide range of services to families. Services include tutoring, mentorship programs, mental health counseling, parenting classes, job preparation classes and cooking classes to name a few. Family Support Services also provides 12-week programs for students focusing on self-awareness, self-esteem and personal planning.

"We focus on the whole child—their academic, emotional and social needs," said Mary Skrabucha, family support services coordinator. "We realize that if we tell families to go somewhere else for services, they aren't likely to do it. This way, kids and parents get everything they need emotionally and socially from the school."

For students, O'Farrell Community School has as an active service-learning program within the community school. Students are required to complete 12 hours of community service per year outside of the regular school day. Students perform three different types of service (community service, school service and home services) and are expected to discuss their service-learning experiences and connect them to their role as citizens within their community.

Academically-Based Community Service Through University-School Partnerships

College-level academics and the effort to establish community schools have formed a unique marriage with the Center for Community Partnership (CCP), housed at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. The CCP incorporates the basics of service-learning (which enables students to study their community surroundings to supplement their academic curriculum) and the community school philosophy, but goes one step further to engage students as active problem-solvers within their communities as part of their academic work. CCP calls its approach "academically-based community service." Dr. Ira Harkavy, director of CCP, and Cory Bowman help coordinate the university's resources that support the overall effort and serve as liaisons to the Philadelphia school district.

While CCP's program embraces service-learning and community schools models, "academically based community service is more than an aggregate of services or participating in a community service project," said Bowman, co-director of the center. "We believe in linking active problem-solving to the core academic curriculum."

Academically-based community service at the CCP is the key ingredient to involving the university's students with local schools in West Philadelphia. More than 130 courses focused on academically based community service are available to University of Pennsylvania students (about 40 courses in a given academic year). Historically, most classes have been in the humanities and social sciences, but today, other disciplines such as the health professions schools and the sciences are joining the effort to combine academic work with community service.

Of the several CCP school and community initiatives, one of the most noteworthy is the Urban Nutrition Initiative (UNI), formerly called the Turner Nutrition Awareness Project. The project emerged from a partnership between Turner Middle School and an undergraduate anthropology seminar in 1990. Initially, college students began collecting dietary data on middle school children. Rather than the middle school children serving as "guinea pigs" in the project, they actively participated with the college students in research and data collection.

By 1994, students were beginning to realize that inner-city school-age children were not getting all the recommended dietary requirements due to poor access to fresh fruits and vegetables (caused in part by the lack of full-service grocery stores in inner city Philadelphia). As a result, students took action to improve nutrition in West Philadelphia. Today there are several student-run operations at three area schools to promote good nutrition in the community. These include an after school fruit and vegetable stand; a farmers' market open on the weekends; school gardens; a community fitness program free to parents and community members; and an urban agriculture and micro-business development at the high school.

UNI connects University of Pennsylvania undergraduate courses with courses in an elementary, middle, and high school in West Philadelphia, creating a pre-K through 16+ curriculum focused on improving community health. The project is focused on researching and developing integrated approaches that will create substantial and broad community participation. Accordingly, changing the curriculum is at the core of UNI's school-based school and community improvement approach. UNI has developed and implemented a curriculum that teaches core subjects (math, social studies, language arts).

"Many service-learning and community school initiatives are supplemental to the academic curriculum, often only an after school activity," said Bowman. "These need to be linked to the core of the school day in order to have staying power."

Bowman believes that one of the ways service-learning and community schools can succeed is to integrate the resources of local schools with local higher education institutions. In the past, many service-learning initiatives have been short-term projects rather than having a permanent place in the curriculum. Bowman said this is because "local schools don't have institutional resources to support long-term service-learning."

Bowman thinks program partnerships like the one between the University of Pennsylvania and local school districts may be the answer for instituting academically based community service on a larger scale. "Colleges and universities should be and can be an institutional anchor for service-learning and community schools projects," said Bowman.

Today, CCP is a leader in the effort to expand university-school collaborations. Partnering with the National Center for Community Education, CCP has developed a training and technical assistance program on the higher education-assisted community school model with support from the Charles Mott Foundation. Three-day workshops are held each spring to promote higher education-community school partnerships. This past spring, 70 representatives from higher education institutions, schools and community groups attended.

Funding Initiatives Using the Community as Context

No matter which education reform model is used, programs that link communities and schools inevitably need funding. In order to support reform models like environmental education, service-learning and place-based learning, the Funder's Forum on Environment and Education, nicknamed F2E2, has been educating grant-giving corporations and foundations since 1997 about place-based education and the funding opportunities that exist within the intersection of the environment and education.

Typically funders have priority areas for grantmaking such as "education," "community service," or "environment." F2E2 aims to show funders the value of programs that combine traditional program areas. Today, there are more than 200 funders involved in the F2E2 network.

F2E2 serves as a clearinghouse of information for funders to think about what unique funding opportunities are available that best serve schools and communities. The network publishes a newsletter, hosts and listserv and sponsors briefings and conference sessions at the regional and national level. F2E2 challenges funders to "think outside the box" for programs that can make a real difference.

Jack Chin, founding director of F2E2, believes that funders are "putting resources out there, but [it] is not being done is such a way that it aggregates and integrates the assets that link school and community, which could add up to something more meaningful and have a greater impact."

Different Approaches, Common Benefits

Although there are several approaches to use a community as context for enhancing student learning, most education reform models have a common desire for students to view learning as relevant to the world around them, to connect with their community and in the process, become concerned and contributing citizens of that community. Using community as the context for educational experiences allows students to reach out to the larger world and place real value in their education as they realize that they too, can make a difference in society. And these programs are getting results. Studies cite better student achievement, revitalized teaching, enhanced youth development, increased citizenship and improved quality of life as reasons to support and implement community-connected education programs. Clearly, it's working.

Internet Addresses for Organizations Mentioned in this Article:

Center for Community Partnership
http://www.upenn.edu/ccp/

Coalition for Community Schools:
http://www.communityschools.org/

Forum on Environment and Education
http://www.f2e2.org/

National Service-Learning Partnership
http://www.service-learningpartnership.org/

State Education and Environment Roundtable
http://www.seer.org/index.html

Community Collaboration for Place-Based Studies

from page 5

Sixth Grade: Architectural History and Barns

• After an overview of the town's architectural history, the sixth grade measured and photographed some of Pownal's largest barns. These documents were then donated to the Pownal Historical Society.

• Students were introduced to "seeing through the lens" by a local photographer who accompanied them to the barns. "A lot of the barns are falling down, but Pownal still has some of the biggest barns around here," one student remarked.

• Different groups studied farm implements and tools.

• Timber framers gave post-and-beam cutting and construction demonstrations.

• The Open House featured models of barns and cupolas the students had made with the agricultural tools that were on display.

Seventh Grade: Natural History Interpretation of Bradbury Mountain

• The seventh graders arranged a number of tours of Bradbury Mountain State Park with local and state resource people. They focused on geology, forestry, edible wild plants, mammals, and hawk migration.

• Students worked in small groups and prepared in-depth papers that they donated to the park's ranger to use in interpretive brochures.

• They completed volunteer work in the park under the supervision of the director.

Eighth Grade: Trails

• The director of Portland Trails introduced the eighth grade to trail design and related community development issues.

• Students mapped the snowmobile, bicycle and horseback riding trails of Pownal.

• Assisted by a local author, students engaged in reflective writing along trails.

• The class participated in an orienteering class offered by L.L. Bean's Discovery Center.

• Students designed and cut a trail from the school to the State Park, securing permission from landowners. The results would be ongoing. In the words of one student: "I like having the new trail from the school to Bradbury Mountain. We can ski on it this winter."

• Students volunteered for trail maintenance in the State Park.

Visiting the outhouse on the Washburn-Norlands living history field trip (1st Grade and 2nd Grade).

The final goal of Pownal Presents! continued to be the development of a community resource directory. This was accomplished with great success. But the project became so much more, and parts were incorporated into the curriculum that remain today. Some directories continue to be revised and updated by teachers and are being used to contact resource people. Teams of teachers continue to create new thematic multidisciplinary approaches to learning. Field experiences have been incorporated into yearly units. For example, all fourth graders canoe the local beaver pond as a part of a wetlands study. Land use studies have been added to the upper school curricula. Service learning is now a component of all students' education while at Pownal schools. And, this year, a now-retired teacher is involving students and community in an ambitious archeology study at Bradbury Mountain State Park.

Some community members wanted to see Pownal Presents! become an ongoing school program. Students even started to say: "*Next year*, maybe we could study forestry. My father knows a lot about trees and he could help us." But this project was large in scale, requiring eight months in preparation and countless hours and energy from volunteers and teachers. An ongoing program would require a paid coordinator and additional paid planning time for teachers, always difficult with a limited budget. However, in an ideal educational system, place-based education would serve as a foundation of support for an entire curriculum.

There was magic in these units of Pownal Presents! From eighth graders' cutting new trails then exploring trail metaphors in their creative writing, to first graders interviewing elders on their memories of one-room schoolhouses, this was a wonderful series of educational experiences that involved every student in the school. And there was pride in the air during the school Open House as students presented slide shows, skits, and artwork, then quizzed their parents and other members of the community on local subjects and shared their new areas of expertise with other grades. The rewards of this project were immeasurable. This was a tangible opportunity for local people to contribute insights and expertise. It engaged people that had never been involved with the school before, strengthening the relationship between the community and schools and inspiring more active participation in both. Students realized that their academic and experiential knowledge had value for the community. The recognition that one has something to contribute, at any age, reveals the best of who they are and develops the awareness that they can make a difference in the world.

June LaCombe has lived in Pownal for over twenty years, is a former school board member, and founding director and former president of The Pownal Foundation. She served as the coordinator of Pownal Presents! as a volunteer. She formerly served as director of education for The Maine Audubon Society and chaired a cultural and natural history collaborative project that developed living history programs at a salt-water farm. June is currently an environmental studies student at Antioch New England exploring sculptural arts and environmental education.

Publications of Note

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selective introduction to understanding our urban youth and the *Annotated Bibliography* compiles publications on youth issues including careers, crime, culture, education, family relations, health, risk and protection, teen pregnancy, and technology. The complete publication is available online at http://srdc.msstate.edu/publications/228_rural_urban.pdf. To order a paper copy, send a request to Debbie Rossell at drossell@srdc.msstate.edu with the title and number of the publication and your name and mailing address.

One Kid at a Time: Big Lessons from A Small School

By Eliot Levine
Teachers College Press,
November 2001

Through the lens of a remarkable urban high school, *One Kid at a Time* weaves compelling stories and a clear narrative into new possibilities for American education. All students at the Met School in Providence, Rhode Island, have a personalized curriculum and complete real-world internships based on their interests. Students stay with the same teacher for four years, and parents help to plan and assess their child's learning. There are no classes, tests, or grades, but high achievement is expected of all students—regardless of their background. Every student in the Met's first two graduating classes has been accepted to college, even though most will be the first in their family ever to attend. Based on the Met's first four years, this book offers powerful ideas and sensible strategies for improving schools. Available directly from Teachers College Press, 1234 Amsterdam Avenue, New York, NY 10027; Telephone (800) 575-6566; Web site: http://www.tcpress.com. The cost is $18.95 for paperback (ISBN: 0-8007-4153-1) and $38.00 for cloth (ISBN: 0-8077-4154-X) plus $4.95 for shipping.

News Briefs

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Over the summer, each school will identify a leadership team of students and adults to guide the project through its various phases. The teams will receive a two-day fall training in each of the five states, led by individuals contracted by Providence College.

Civic engagement and activism are familiar concepts for most Rural Trust high schools. We look forward to using Project 540 as a vehicle to expand the field of rural youth working to improve our rural schools and communities.

Rosenwald Schools Identified As One of America's 11 "Most Endangered" Historic Sites

The Rosenwald Schools, schoolhouses founded to improve education for African Americans in the rural areas of the South and Southwest from 1913 to 1932, are among the National Trust for Historic Preservation's 11 "most endangered" historic sites for 2002. Schools like the four-room Sweet Home Vocational and Agricultural High School in Sweet Home, Texas are in danger of disappearing for good, according to the preservation group.

The Rosenwald Schools were started when philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, CEO of Sears, became interested in Booker T. Washington's mission to improve education for rural African Americans. More than 500 schoolhouses that ranged in size from one room to several rooms were built. These buildings held a special place in the community because schools and churches were the only places where blacks could meet in the rural South before desegregation. Individual school systems originally owned the schools, but after desegregation, schools were often closed or abandoned. Most of the remaining schools are 75 to 85 years old and have insufficient funds for maintenance.

A related National Trust report, *Historic Neighborhood Schools in the Age of Sprawl: Why Johnny Can't Walk to School* is available online at http://www.nationaltrust.org/issues/schoolsRpt.pdf. For more information on "most endangered" sites, go to http://www.nationaltrust.org/11most/2002/index.html.

Lights On Afterschool! Rally

On October 10, 2002, more than 5,000 sites across the country will rally to demonstrate the ways afterschool programs improve student performance, support working families and keep communities safe. To register as a Lights On Afterschool event site, find an event in your area, learn about how you can participate or to request a Lights On Afterschool action kit, please call (877) 759-9733, toll free.

Starting a Volunteer Project in Your School

Idealist.org recently launched a new resource center for any teacher who wants to start a school volunteering or service-learning program. The site provides nuts-and-bolts policies and procedures, useful definitions and articles, examples of schools that have successfully integrated community service or service learning into their curricula, classroom activities that can accompany student volunteering, online volunteer matching organizations, and information about how to find a volunteer center in your community. Visit the site at http://www.idealist.org/kat/volunteercenter.html.

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Publications *of Note*

High Stakes: Children, Testing, and Failure in American Schools (A Year in the Life of One Rural School)

by Dale Johnson and Bonnie Johnson
Rowman & Littlefield, August 2002

The authors of *High Stakes* were college professors who left academe to work in a rural Louisiana school. In this richly informative text, the authors present the voices of students and teachers about educational reform issues such as high-stakes testing, school accountability and inequities in public school funding that can impede learning in rural areas with widespread child poverty. This book (ISBN: 0-7425-1788-8) can be ordered directly from the publisher for the cost of $69.00 via an online ordering system at http://www.rowmanlittlefield.com/orderinfo/USorders.shtml or at bookstores nationwide.

A Handbook for State Policy Leaders-Community Schools: Improving Student Learning/ Strengthening Schools, Families and Communities

Coalition for Community Schools, June 2002

The Coalition for Community Schools has released its new *Handbook for State Policy Leaders*. The handbook is designed to help state leaders to form vital connections between schools and communities to improve student learning. It is helpful to the work of policy leaders in cities, counties, local school districts, and philanthropy. An executive summary of the report is can be obtained free of charge by sending an e-mail message to ccs@iel.org or by calling (202) 822-9045. The handbook is available online at http://www.communityschools.org/handbook.pdf.

Rural-Urban Connections

Southern Rural Development Center, April 2002

Rural-Urban Connections (publication # 228 in the Southern Rural Development Series) is a combination of three publications in one: *Key Issues Facing Rural Youth* by Daniel F. Perkins, *Urban Youth* by Anthony J. LaGreca and *Annotated Bibliography: Youth Issues* compiled by Ronald L. Mullis. *Key Issues Facing Rural Youth* examines the challenges and prospects of youth living in rural areas and provides a framework for youth to improve the rural communities in which they live. *Urban Youth* presents a

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Volume 3, No. 5
October 2002

THE RURAL SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY TRUST

ISSN 1532-642X

Rural Roots

News, Information, and Commentary from the Rural School and Community Trust

Rural Trust Announces Affiliate Campaign

Individuals, Organizations Invited to Join

Since its beginnings in 1995, the Rural School and Community Trust has grown to become a network of more than 700 schools, communities, organizations and individuals (more than 8,000 of them) concerned about rural America and involved in place-based education. This year, the Rural Trust is beginning a campaign inviting individuals and organizations to actively choose to establish or continue a relationship with the organization. Affiliation is open to individuals (adults and students), schools or districts, higher education institutions, and tribal, community, nonprofit, youth, or faith-based organizations.

Affiliation, which is free, offers several benefits including a subscription

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Rural Schools Participate in Youth Civic Engagement Initiative

By Elaina Loveland

This academic year, 100,000 students' voices from urban, suburban and rural high schools in 15 states will be heard as they join in a new youth civic engagement program funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts.

"Project 540: Students Turn for a Change" is a one-year student-led and student-centered program that aims to expand civic engagement opportunities for young people across the United States, and establish a national network for youth civic engagement. The initiative is housed and supported by Providence College in Providence, Rhode Island.

Rural schools in six states are among the many high schools participating in the "Project 540" program.

The name Project 540 stands for a turn of 540 degrees—a revolution and a half. During the course of a year, students will identify the issues they care about and examine the current landscape for student civic engagement in their high school. This first phase represents one revolution. Then, students will take an additional half-turn to create recommendations that will enhance their opportunities for community involvement—a 540 degree turn for civic change.

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Rural*Datebook*

Public Education Network 11th Annual Conference

Washington, DC

"Standards-Based Reform: A Civic Imperative" is the theme of the Public Education Network's 11th annual conference. Conference discussion topics include how standards-based reform impacts public education, what the future holds for the standards-based reform movement and how education advocates use standards to build public involvement in their work. More detailed information about the conference is available on the Internet at http://www.publiceducation.org/events/conference/index.htm#. Contact Mary Anne Hickey at (202) 628-7460 ext. 219 or e-mail mahickey@PublicEducation.org with questions.

Fall Forum 2002: What School Should Be

Coalition of Essential Schools
Marriott Wardman Park,
Washington, DC

The Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) fall forum is an annual event bringing together a diverse group of more than 2,000 educators to share ideas and practices in the areas of school design, classroom practice, leadership and community connections. For specific questions, please call (510) 433-1451 or e-mail vcoleman@essentialschools.org.

To list your upcoming events in the December 2002 newsletter, please contact Rural Roots at editor@ruraledu.org or call (202) 955-7177, ext. 14.

Rural Trust Announces Affiliate Campaign

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to the bimonthly *Rural Roots* newsletter, public recognition of your affiliation, information packets and invitations to various Rural Trust conferences, workshops and special events. In addition, affiliates receive up-to-date news of rural education issues to stay well informed about work in the field, as well as the satisfaction of being part of a nationwide effort to improve rural schools and communities.

While there is no fee for affiliation with the Rural Trust, some services such as on-site training or conference and workshop registrations may require fees. In return, affiliates will have the opportunity to share knowledge and expertise with others in the network through workshop presentations, cross-site visits, online discussion forums and published reports. There are three levels of affiliation, with benefits that increase at each level:

Level 1: Exploratory, for those new to place-based education and previously unassociated with the Rural Trust;

Level 2: Intermediate, for those who have varying levels of experience and/or commitment to place-based education, with several teachers and community members involved; and

Level 3: Leadership, for those committed to Rural Trust principles, experienced in place-based education with integration into teaching and learning processes, experienced in using the portfolio-based assessment rubric, and willing to mentor others.

The time has never been better for educators, community members and organizations to reaffirm their commitment to rural schools and communities and to be part of a growing national network. The Rural Trust believes that, united in the cause, we can help rural schools and communities get better together.

Affiliate with the Rural Trust by visiting our Web site and filling out the form found at http://www.ruraledu.org/affiliate.html. Affiliate applications are also available by mail. To request an application, or if you have questions about affiliation and its benefits, call the Rural Trust's Capacity Building program office at (252) 433-8844. Please note: Even if you have already been receiving Rural Trust publications, we encourage you to fill out an affiliate application so that we can acknowledge and communicate with everyone connected to the organization.

THE RURAL SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY TRUST

Rural Roots

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Rural Roots is published six times per year by the Rural School and Community Trust, a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to enlarging student learning and improving community life by strengthening relationships between rural schools and communities and engaging students in community-based public work.

Through advocacy, research, and outreach, the Rural Trust strives to create a more favorable environment for rural community schooling, for student work with a public audience and use, and for more active community participation in schooling.

Founded as the Annenberg Rural Challenge in 1995, the Rural Trust today works with more than 700 rural elementary and secondary schools in 35 states.

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GreaterNET Combats Missouri Teacher Shortage with Technology

By Elaina Loveland

In rural areas of Missouri, many schools have difficulty attracting teachers for specific subjects, yet students at these schools must still take courses in these subjects that are required by the state for graduation. An organization called GreaterNET has found a solution to the problem: offering courses to school systems via Interactive Television (I-TV). Located in Blue Springs, Missouri, GreaterNET is an independent, not-for-profit, member-based organization whose mission is to broker I-TV courses across Missouri and provide support services for K–12 schools involved in two-way interactive television. GreaterNET offers support services such as I-TV project management, training, grant writing, and technical consulting to its school and higher education institution members.

Ellen Ervin, executive director of GreaterNET, describes I-TV as similar to videoconferencing. "We use the same technology as corporations use when they have video conference calls. This technology allows students and teachers to interact live through television the same way," she said.

The idea to start GreaterNET began when three I-TV cluster coordinators in different regions in Missouri realized that schools' increasing course needs could not be fully met within their clusters—they needed to collaborate in order to maximize course offerings to schools. The Rural School and Community Trust provided initial funds to get the organization "off the ground" in January 2001. The Rural Trust's support of GreaterNET is part of an innovative program of rural Education Renewal Zones (ERZs) in Missouri. The goal of the ERZ initiative is to improve rural education and teacher preparation through the use of technology. Besides GreaterNET, the ERZ collaboration includes two teacher training institutions, a technical college, the state education agency, and a variety of technical support organizations.

"What's unique about GreaterNET is that we don't just have a catalog of courses for schools to choose from," said Vicki Hobbs, treasurer and member of the board of directors. "Instead, we attempt to match every course need that each school has. If a school needs a course in geometry, we find a way to make it happen."

GreaterNET's most requested I-TV courses are in the foreign languages, particularly Spanish. This fall, GreaterNET has contracts to offer 13 Spanish I classes, nine Spanish II classes, two photography classes, one physics class and one college algebra class. Twenty schools are participating in GreaterNET's I-TV course offerings and several more schools are interested, but are looking for funds to purchase the technology needed to provide I-TV.

Gary Cutts, principal of Eminence High School in south central Missouri, said that he has been using I-TV courses for five years and has been working with GreaterNET since its beginning. This year, Eminence High, which serves 160 students in grades 7–12, will offer Spanish I, Spanish II and medical terminology courses through Greater Net. "In a school of our size, we only need about two hours of foreign language instruction per day and cannot afford to hire a full-time teacher when the need is low," he said. "I-TV courses are a great alternative."

NewsBriefs

Rural Trust to Offer New Training Programs

In order to better serve rural schools and communities, the Rural School and Community Trust is developing a new series of training programs that support place-based education and community collaboration. These training modules cover a range of topics that include an introduction to place-based education; how to design and implement place-based projects; building and sustaining school-community connections; developing support structures; moving from knowledge to activism; using a portfolio-based assessment system, and others. These modules will not only provide answers to broad questions about how to implement place-based education, but also will provide an opportunity for participants to ask—and work together to find answers to—better questions unique to their own community.

Look for postings on the Rural Trust Web site (http://www.ruraledu.org) and in future issues of *Rural Roots* to find out how you can attend workshops, obtain materials or become a trainer.

Rural Students Participate in Scholars Program

The Wallis Annenberg Scholars program, housed at the University of Southern California (USC), is an innovative summer program for high school sophomores designed to inspire students to achieve higher academic, social and ethical standards.

The program began in the summer of 2001 as students were chosen from ten Annenberg Challenge sites to participate in the USC Summer Seminars Program.

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Youth*Council*

The 2002 Youth Directing Change Institute

Learning Together: Youth-Adult Partnerships for Change

From the Rural School and Community Trust National Youth Council

In June 2002, 50 young people and 25 adults from 23 states gathered for "Youth Directing Change," an intensive three-day institute to discuss the challenges and possibilities of revitalizing rural schools and communities. The institute, held in Nebraska City, Nebraska was designed by the Rural School and Community Trust's 18-member National Youth Council. The meeting emphasized the group's belief that social change is most powerful when youth and adults collaborate. Five focus areas explored the role of youth in environmental sustainability, economic development, local and state policy, media and technology, and the arts and cultural heritage. Activities at the institute reflected the goals of the Youth Council; youth-adult teams led all formal activities. Representatives from Youth on Board, the Food Project, and Community Partnerships with Youth led various training exercises that demonstrated youth-adult partnerships with clear success at local, regional, and national levels.

Photos: The "Youth Directing Change" institute brought together youth and adults to explore the role of students in social change. Credit: Barbara Cervone, What Kids Can Do

Participants spent numerous hours together, sharing strategies and outlining action steps in the five focus areas. For example, issues discussed in the local and state policy focus group included:

- Taking action on air quality issues in inadequate school facilities
- Discussing personal, racial, and economic preferences with school boards
- Addressing teacher union opposition to student-evaluated courses
- Changing state accountability practices to include place-based education and local standards of education
- Finding remedies for high teacher turnover and lack of appropriate certification

The environmental sustainability focus group built a "road map" that charted the steps of discovery, implementation, and completion of successful environmental projects.

"I've learned a great deal about environmental issues from this focus group. I also gained great ideas for my classroom from fellow teachers who attended this institute," said Lisa Carder, a journalism teacher from Albion, Nebraska.

The arts and cultural heritage focus group dealt with the perceived devaluation of art and cultural heritage in rural America. When asked why the arts appear to be "expendable subjects instead of life skills," answers dealt with a lack of empirical testing, little exposure about the value of art, and problems the arts have with stereotypically defined sex and gender roles. The group brainstormed possible ways to eliminate the social barriers the arts and cultural heritage face.

The National Youth Council will continue to review the findings of the focus groups as it develops a strategy on how to support young people in their community building and activist efforts.

Each participant left the institute with practical "next steps" to address the issues discussed in the various focus groups. "Listening to the stories of others, their approach to problems, and progress made in their communities has empowered me to be a more involved activist in my own community," commented one participant.

Sarabeth Perez, from Greenfield, California, said, "I was refreshed with the many techniques and ideas that I could apply when I get back to my community. I have a better understanding what steps I need to take to be successful. This truly was a great experience."

Colt Kraus of Taylor, Nebraska summed up the participants' reactions: "Probably the most important thing that I've learned is that kids and adults can—and need to—work together to get things accomplished."

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An Interview with Wendy Wheeler

Leader Sees Growing Trend in Youth Civic Engagement

Wendy Wheeler

Wendy Wheeler is president of the Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, a nonprofit organization based in Chevy Chase, Maryland, that is striving to increase and improve youth involvement in local communities. She was interviewed by Rural Roots *editor Elaina Loveland.*

What is your background? How did you get involved in youth development?

I was involved in youth development as a young person, with the Girl Scouts, among other organizations. I have always had a strong belief in volunteerism, which sprang from my experiences with youth development when I was young. My educational background is in organizational and human development as well as environmental sciences. Professionally, I have served as the director of training for the Girl Scouts of the USA, where I reorganized the national training program, and I was also senior vice president at the National 4-H Council. I have also been involved with the YMCA and YWCA and other local community organizations.

What does the Innovation Center do?

The Innovation Center is an international organization that works to unleash the potential of individuals, organizations, and communities to engage together in creating a just and equitable society. We provide a variety of services. We seek out innovative new practices in youth development and promote them; we provide training and technical assistance to communities and organizations; we sponsor peer-learning and peer-exchanges; we provide guidance on youth governance and development of youth-adult partnerships; assist with evaluation and research; and we give funds directly to community groups.

How was the Innovation Center founded?

The Innovation Center was established three years ago. Originally, the Center was a division of the National 4-H Council, but now we are a separate organization affiliated with the Tides Center, which serves as our fiscal agent.

What are the trends in youth development?

The greatest trend in youth development right now is that we are seeing an increasing interest in engaging young people in meaningful civic engagement activities that really make a difference. We are also seeing more youth-directed work rather than adults just facilitating work for youth.

Who are the gurus in the field?

The gurus in the youth development really are the young people in the community. The real knowledge rests with them.

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Youth*Resources*

Publications

Youth Today, (202) 785-0764, www.youthtoday.org
CYD Journal, (617) 522-3435 (General Information), (866) 293-4636 (Subscriptions), www.cydjournal.org
Youth in Decision-Making: A Study on the Impacts of Youth on Adults and Organizations
The research was published in partnership with the National 4-H Council, University of Wisconsin Extension, and the Youth in Governance task force of the National Association of Extension 4-H Agents. Available in electronic format only as a free download at http://www.theinnovationcenter.org/images/products/01240215104234_YouthinDecisionMakingReportRevised9-01.pdf

Organizations

American Youth Policy Forum, (202) 775-9731, www.aypf.org
Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, (301) 961-2837, www.theinnovationcenter.org, www.atthetable.org
Do Something, (212) 523-1175, www.dosomething.org
The Forum for Youth Investment, (301) 270-6250, www.forumforyouthinvestment.org
International Youth Forum, (410 347-1500), www.iyfnet.org
National 4-H Council, (301) 961-2972, www.fourhcouncil.edu
National Youth Leadership Council, Strategic Youth Initiatives, (651) 631-3672, www.nylc.org
Points of Light Foundation, (202) 729-8000, www.pointsoflight.org
What Kids Can Do, Inc., (401) 247-7665, www.whatkidscando.org
Youth at the United Nations, (212) 963-2791, www.un.org/youth
YouthBuild USA, (617) 623-9900, www.youthbuild.org
Youth on Board, (617) 623-9900 ext. 1242, www.youthonboard.org
YouthNOISE, www.youthnoise.com
Youth Venture, (703) 527-8300 ext. 324, www.youthventure.org

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Rural Schools Participate in Youth Civic Engagement Initiative

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"Young people own more of the future than we do, and we need to grant them a greater voice and investment in it," said Dr. Richard M. Battistoni, professor of political science at Providence College and director of Project 540. "This project is by and for young people. We want them to see that they have a stake in the life of their communities and that they have a responsibility to participate in them."

"We're asking to hear from students," said Eric Goldman national field director of Project 540. "We want to hear students' voices and what they have to say."

The Rural School and Community Trust is the only Project 540 "site" that is actually a collection of schools: 23 rural high schools in Alabama, Nebraska, North Carolina, Ohio, South Dakota and Vermont. According to Rural Trust site coordinator Julie Bartsch, the "Rural Radicals" have already made their mark on Project 540, urging that community members be included on the leadership teams and that students be involved in active projects as well as dialogue.

Prior to launching Project 540 in schools, staff at Providence College and Youth on Board, a Boston-based nonprofit organization dedicated to helping youth become leaders in their communities, have been conducting leadership and student-facilitator trainings.

Each school has a leadership team consisting of students and a lead teacher, who will guide the project through the four phases or dialogues, Goldman said. Students will: (1) identify issues that are important to them; (2) choose those issues they would like the schools to help them address; (3) examine opportunities that already exist for them to participate in civic life and (4) develop a civic action plan or proposal for the school's students to get involved with the community.

Matilda Hamilton, a parent and member of the leadership team at Edward Bell High School in Millerville, Alabama said: "Millerville is in the middle of nowhere and no one wants to hear us…this process is teaching our young people how to get their voices heard."

"If they're going to be our citizens we need to work with them," said Robi Kroger, Rural Trust site coordinator for the Nebraska and South Dakota schools participating in Project 540. "We want them to be valuable assets to their communities."

In addition to the rural schools participating in Project 540, many other schools and districts across the U.S. are part of the project. For information on the other participants, and more details on the initiative, visit the Project 540 Web site at http://www.project540.org.

Profiles of the Rural School and Community Trust clusters participating in Project 540 follow.

Alabama

Bibb Graves High School, Millerville, AL. Enrollment: 145

Edward Bell High School, Camp Hill, AL. Enrollment: 270

John Essex High School, Demopolis, AL. Enrollment: 100

Loachapoka High School, Loachapoka, AL. Enrollment: 200

These four small schools represent the racial diversity of rural Alabama: Bibb Graves school is a racially integrated school and Edward Bell High School, John Essex High School and Loachapoka High School are traditionally African American schools. Students in several of these schools have sponsored and run community newspapers, have done community history and photography projects, and have participated in community music and theater programs. Students are actively involved in strengthening and preserving their small schools in an environment where many small schools have been closed or consolidated in the name of cutting costs (without evidence that it is truly cost-effective) and despite the community value of the school. With the support of community members and teachers, students at Bibb Graves High School recently helped to reverse a court decision to consolidate their school.

North Carolina

Fairmont High School, Fairmont, NC. Enrollment: 784

South Robeson High School, Robeson, NC. Enrollment: 587

Red Springs High School, Red Springs, NC. Enrollment: 692

St. Pauls High School, St. Pauls, NC. Enrollment: 845

Purnell Swett High School, Pembroke, NC. Enrollment: 1486

The five high schools in this cluster are located in Robeson County, the most ethnically diverse rural county in the U.S., according to the 1990 census. The County's population is approximately one-third Native American (Lumbee), one-third European American, and one-third African American and Hispanic.

These high schools have classes and clubs that are involved in short-term community-service projects, including tutoring assistance, working with food pantries and clothing drives, Special Olympics and "Big Sweep"—the annual river cleanup day. The schools hope to expand their "Green Maps" project as part of their civic engagement work, in which middle and

high school students from across the county locate historical, cultural, civic and recreational sites along with geographical and environmental features, and then publish community maps identifying these landmarks and resources. Green Maps have been used in various parts of the world to help groups educate the public about their communities' assets and increase local participation in protecting these precious local resources. The original Green Map model was expanded in these schools to include cultural, historical, and political resources, earning them recognition from Green Map International. The expansion of the mapping model has helped bring Robeson County's diverse communities together around a shared history.

South Dakota and Nebraska

Bell Fourche High School, Bell Fourche, SD. Enrollment: 67

Boone Central High School, Albion, NE. Enrollment: 287

Burwell High School, Burwell, NE. Enrollment: 135

Elgin High School, Elgin, NE. Enrollment: 108

Howard High School, Howard, SD. Enrollment: 280

Loup County High School, Taylor, NE. Enrollment: 68

Ord High School, Ord, NE. Enrollment: 287

Several of these schools have been working together over the past four years in their affiliation with the Rural Trust. The South Dakota schools were part of the Program for Rural School and Community Renewal, a statewide 15-school network coordinated by South Dakota State University; and the Nebraska schools partnered with School at the Center, a statewide 26-school network coordinated by the University of Nebraska. All these schools have strong commitments to their communities and actively involve students in the issues and challenges of community life. Students help communities celebrate cultural heritage and renew cultural traditions, practice environmental preservation, conduct research and launch entrepreneurial ventures that are expanding their communities' limited economic opportunities, and contribute valuable input to local government committees. For example, students at Ord High School in Nebraska have worked with the Valley Economic Development Group to recruit a business, which has created over 100 new jobs in their community of 2,500.

Ohio

Trimble High School, Glouster, OH. Enrollment: 307

Federal Hocking High School, Stewart, OH. Enrollment: 420

Miller High School, Hemlock, OH. Enrollment: 300

Warren High School, Vincent, OH. Enrollment: 941

All four of these rural high schools are in the Appalachian region of Ohio. Even with substantial environmental degradation, the area continues to possess incredible biodiversity. The region has a rich culture and history, with strong traditions in music, arts and crafts. With the support of Rural Action, a grassroots community organization that organizes citizens to strengthen local communities, students in several of these schools are involved in the long-running *DeRolph* school funding case. The lawsuit, filed on behalf of more than 500 school districts in Ohio, has lasted a decade. In order to effectively involve students in some of the important education policy issues in Ohio, Rural Action produced a curriculum guide on the *DeRolph* case to be used in civics, social studies and government classes. Last May, approximately 900 students from 13 different schools attended a rally at the Ohio Statehouse on the school funding issue.

Students in these schools are also working a project to increase local involvement in school facilities design in several school districts in the area. Students are doing an action research project that involves photographing their existing buildings as a way of documenting design and structural strengths and weaknesses. The students will share these images with community and civic organizations to get them involved in the process of designing new facilities for the districts.

Vermont

Cabot K–12 School, Cabot, VT. High school enrollment: 90

People's Academy, Morrisville, VT. Enrollment: 364

Thetford Academy, Thetford, VT. Enrollment: 360 (grades 7–12)

These three high schools are part of a coalition of 18 rural schools in northern Vermont called the Vermont Rural Partnership (VRP). Formed in 1996, the schools have these goals in common: building adult/youth partnerships; fostering school/community partnerships; developing place-based curriculum; and promoting citizenship skills in youth by service to the community. VRP schools are all small, ranging in size from 32 students to 400. The VRP is a nonprofit organization with proven experience in coordinating multi-school projects. The VRP

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First*Person*

Saying Goodbye to Lily School

By Sandra Gallagher and Elizabeth Thuestad

Editor's Note: The closing of small rural schools has become more common in recent decades. This article is about the closing of one particular school, the Lily School. This school, located in Lily, Wisconsin, population 100, served 24 students in grades K–6 and was closed in June 2002. Authors Sandra Gallagher and Elizabeth Thuestad were teachers at Lily School before its closing. Here, they tell their story.

According to Paula DeHart, professor at the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, "Everyone is at home at Lily." Dr. DeHart was part of a three-year research project to find evidence of best practices being used in schools that embodied the "whole schooling" philosophy. We were proud to be selected as one of eight schools in Wisconsin that exemplified the five principles of whole schooling: empowering citizens in a democracy, including all, teaching and adapting for diversity, building community, and supporting learning and partnering.

We were pleased to receive this recognition and hoped that the elevated status would allow the school board to visualize Lily School as a positive model rather than a financial burden. The community had been fighting closure of our tiny two-room school for the past few decades. Unfortunately, the very year the research study was completed and submitted to the federal government, the school board made the decision to permanently close our school.

Students from the Lily Community Charter School, which was closed in June 2002.

We began teaching at Lily School in 1984 and every few years since, the board considered closing the school. Our closest call came when the subject of handicapped accessibility was added to the usual financial concerns. Our school and community rallied, researching the legislative history of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The school board listened attentively as one mom recounted her conversation with the author of the bill. We were saved once again through the determination and support of our families and community.

Financial woes of the state and our district motivated us to become a charter school in the fall of 2000. We knew our multi-age program and innovative teaching techniques merited charter status and anticipated that the additional funding available to charters would ensure our survival.

This past year, our district embarked on a path toward widespread consolidation. Prior to Lily's closure we had 10 elementary schools. The district's plan is to pare down the number of buildings it needs to maintain. The board voted in March to close Lily as well as another charter school in the district. Our low enrollment made fighting the decision seem hopeless. The families of the students reluctantly accepted the decision and focused on making a smooth transition into neighboring schools.

We believed we could maintain the integrity of our multi-age program in another building, but unfortunately, that wasn't possible. Most of Lily's students are attending the closest rural elementary school, which is about 15 miles away. The additional students strain some classroom numbers, which will be remedied the following year through district re-alignment. Lily students were taken to meet their new classmates and teachers on a visit day this past spring.

The staff hasn't been as fortunate. We have always worked so well as a team. Our dream was to recreate our program at another site. The hurried time frame of the whole situation didn't allow for meaningful discussion regarding this issue. Meetings with the administration were frustrating. At times, we were given hope and at other times we were expected not to question the district's unarticulated vision for the future. Thus, we find ourselves in a position where the entire staff has been dismantled and reassigned to placements that were the most convenient for the district's human resource department. We feel we are floundering in our new positions, searching for others in our buildings who share a common philosophy of teaching.

What does the closure of Lily School mean to the community? As with so many small towns, the school is the defining feature. Over the years the town's businesses have closed, but the school has always remained. It has provided not only education for the children but a sense of community for all. Christmas plays written by teachers were the highlight of the season. Awards day picnics were attended by all, young and old. Whenever there was a need at the school, there was always someone to come to the rescue. The local people, many of whom attended the school themselves, were proud of their school. It is so hard to describe the responsibility the local people felt towards this school. When someone coined the phrase, "it takes a village to raise a child," they could have truly been describing Lily, Wisconsin. It is evident that the level of commitment will be difficult to maintain with the students being bused throughout the district.

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GrantsWatch

Grant Title: *LYSOL/NSTA Science and Your Health Challenge*
Organization: *Lysol Brand and National Science Teachers Association*
Deadline: *December 16, 2002*

Lysol Brand and the National Science Teachers Association invite elementary teachers to submit innovative science projects on health related issues for grants of $1,500 to be used for professional development and classroom materials. Submissions must focus on a classroom project used to help students learn science while engaging in issues related to health. Issues could include, but are not limited to, personal health and hygiene, home/community health and environment, food growing, food preparation and consumption issues, disease, infection control and safety. Applicants must be certified, K–6 classroom teachers, U.S. citizens and currently teaching in a public or private school. Forty teachers will be selected. Additional information is available at the following Web site: http://www.nsta.org/lysol. For questions, contact Christina Gorski at (703) 243-7100 or e-mail cgorski@nsta.org.

Grant: *Toyota TAPESTRY (K–12 Science Teachers)*
Funder: *Toyota Motor Sales, Inc. and the National Science Teachers Association*
Deadline: *January 16, 2003*

The 2003 Toyota TAPESTRY program will award 50 grants of up to $10,000 each and a minimum of 20 "mini-grants" of $2,500 each to K–12 science teachers. Interested teachers should propose innovative science projects that can be implemented in their school or school district over a one-year period. Toyota TAPESTRY projects demonstrate creativity, involve risk-taking, possess a visionary quality, and model a novel way of presenting science. Toyota TAPESTRY grants will be awarded in three categories: environmental science education, physical science applications and literacy and science education. For more information, please visit http://www.nsta.org/programs/tapestry/index.htm.

Grant: *Ventures in Leadership*
Funder: *Wallace Reader's Digest Funds*
Deadline: *December 2002*

Ventures in Leadership is a program of the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds designed to support innovative ideas in education leadership from a wide range of communities, especially those in low-income neighborhoods. Its goals are to create new knowledge of broad potential value to others in the field, and to advance other Funds-sponsored leadership programs in school districts and states across the nation.

Ventures in Leadership is a part of LEADERS Count, an initiative of the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds whose goal is to foster a national movement intended to improve classroom learning by attracting a broader pool of talented principals and superintendents, strengthening the preparation of these school leaders and improving the conditions under which they run their schools. ***Grants of $5,000 to $50,000 will be made on a monthly basis through December 2002.*** Grant recipients will have up to two years to develop, implement and test their practical, innovative ideas about strengthening school leadership. Non-profit organizations, public schools, colleges, universities or other community-based organizations are eligible to apply for awards. The application must be submitted online at http://www.wallacefunds.org/questionnaire/form_intro.cfm. For more information, call the Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds at (212) 251-9700, state that you are calling with a question about Ventures in Leadership, identify your name and organization, and you will be forwarded to the appropriate member of the staff.

Saying Goodbye to Lily School

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And, what will happen to the building? Over the last few years the students have researched the history of Lily School. We know this was the fourth building the town built. The "new building," as the old-timers refer to it, was constructed after a fire had burned the previous one in 1933. The town and the school board are discussing how to "dispose" of the building. The district doesn't want the building, but may want the revenue from its sale. Some members of the town would like to keep it as a community center. Others are concerned that it will be an added burden for the taxpayers to maintain. Nobody won in this situation. The students lost a school that felt like home to them. The community lost a part of its history. Parents lost a school where they were welcome and that connected them to the community. And the staff lost a vision of education.

Submissions

Rural Roots contains stories that share the incredible variety of place-based work going on around the country, its successes and challenges. Stories on rural community development, individuals and organizations making a difference in education and community life, and practitioner interests are all highlighted throughout the year.

Rural Roots is published six times per year and is distributed to more than 6,000 constituents. We encourage stories that focus on groundbreaking place-based education projects, youth-adult partnerships, small schools and consolidation, economic development, conservation, the arts, and instructive resource guides geared to teachers, to name a few.

We publish stories ranging from 400 to 2,000 words. If you are interested in submitting an article, please e-mail the editor at editor@ruraledu.org or call (202) 955-7177. We cannot offer payment for articles.

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News Briefs from page 3

as Wallis Annenberg Scholars. The Rural School and Community Trust was invited to designate three students as Wallis Annenberg Scholars.

To apply for the program, students were required to submit academic transcripts and two letters of recommendation, in addition to a writing sample about why they wanted to attend the program. This unique opportunity enabled the Wallis Annenberg Scholars to earn three college credits by participating in one of six, six-week seminars offered by USC (Acting Workshop, Art: A Studio Experience, Art and Architecture, Engineering, Introduction to Film and Introduction to Parliamentary Debate). All their expenses were paid, and each student received a laptop computer to help with their work—and to keep at the conclusion of the seminar.

Last year's Wallis Annenberg scholars were Luiz Munoz from Schleicher County (Texas) Rural Challenge, Jarthy Monterroso from Ventura County (California) Rural Challenge, and Seth Fowler from Matfield Green Consortium in Kansas. Due to their academic success and motivation, each scholar was invited to return for a second summer in the program at the end of their junior year.

Students who participated in the Annenberg Scholars Program for a second year were delighted to return.

"I wish I had the words to describe this experience," said Munoz. "This program helped me find myself."

Fowler described the program as "the best experience" he ever had. "Besides what I learned in the classroom, a majority of the learning was done on my own," he said.

Wallis Annenberg Scholars who attended the seminar for the first time this past summer include Jessica Williams from the Mississippi Delta Five Project, Claudia Martinez from Ventura County and Joshua Trejo from Schleicher County.

The Annenberg Scholars will be writing about their experiences, which will be posted on the youth page of the Rural Trust Web site by the end of the year.

Child Welfare Journal Publishes Special Issue on Rural Child Care

Child Welfare Journal, published by the Child Welfare League of America, has taken notice of the unique challenges facing rural America and has published a special September/October 2002 issue entitled "The Crisis in Rural Child Care." A few of the articles in this issue include: "Toward a Community-Based National Rural Policy: The Importance of the Social Services Sector"; "Indicators of Social Well-Being and Elements of Child Welfare in Minnesota Rural Communities"; "Challenging the One-Size-Fits-All Myth: Findings and Solutions from a Statewide Focus Group of Rural Social Workers"; "Social Services: The Navajo Way"; "Rural Child Welfare Practice from an Organization-in-Environment Perspective"; and "A Rural Road: Exploring Opportunities, Networks, Services, and Supports that Affect Rural Families." Article abstracts are available at http://www.cwla.org/articles/cwjabstracts.htm. For more information about the Child Welfare League of America, call (202) 638-2952.

New Journal for Rural Mathematics Educators

Rural Mathematics Educator, a new online quarterly journal dedicated to rural mathematics education, has recently been established by the Appalachian Collaborative Center for Learning, Assessment, and Instruction in Mathematics (ACCLAIM) at Ohio University. The inaugural issue was published in June 2002 and readers across the globe can now subscribe free online at http://kant.citl.ohiou.edu/ACCLAIM/comm/comm_sub/sign_up.htm.

"Our mission is to raise the profile of the rural context within mathematics education. Hardly any attention has been paid to it," said Craig Howley, a faculty member of the Ohio University College of Education, who co-directs ACCLAIM's Research Initiative with another faculty member, Jim Shultz.

The journal aims to provide information on issues facing mathematics education in rural areas and includes feature stories, reviews, useful resources for rural mathematics educators and professional development and publishing opportunities.

Endowment Awards $2.3 Million for Arts Partnerships Serving Youth

The National Endowment for the Arts recently announced that its Challenge America: Positive Alternatives for Youth program has awarded 249 grants totaling more than $2.3 million for projects featuring artist residencies in schools and civic and community organizations. Funded projects serve young people in communities ranging from rural, isolated towns that lack art and social service resources to low-income urban neighborhoods. A complete listing of grant recipients is available at http://www.nea.gov/learn/02grants/PAY1.html. In 2003, the program will become part of the NEA's newly expanded and restructured Arts and Learning grant category, which supports opportunities both in school and outside the regular school calendar in the areas of early childhood, school-based and community-based projects. For more general information on the new Arts and Learning grants, visit http://www.nea.gov/guide/ArtsLearning03/ALindex.html or call (202) 682-5536 for early childhood and school based projects or (202) 682-5026 for community-based projects.

Leader Sees Growing Trend in Youth Civic Engagement

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What organizations and publications are good resources for people who want to learn more about youth development?

Resources about youth development really depend on the audience. For young people and their allies, I'd recommended checking out the Web site of "At the Table" (http://www.atthetable.org). "At the Table" is a clearinghouse of resources on youth in decision-making, governance and community involvement. Youth can learn how to get involved, find out about conferences and specific organizations, review surveys and polls and participate in online discussions. Engaging youth in developing policy and decision-making in local communities is what "At the Table" is all about.

For teachers and community members, I'd recommend investigating the work of the Forum for Youth Investment and the International Youth Foundation. The Forum for Youth Investment helps organizations in the U.S. invest in youth for positive change. Mainly, they promote more youth development and policy development. The International Youth Foundation's work spans over 60 countries and tries to improve the conditions and prospects for young people in their local communities. Learning about youth development from organizations that have been doing it for years is a good place for teachers and community members to start.

There are general publications on youth development out there, and more are starting. *Youth Today* is a newspaper for a general audience interested in youth development. The *CYD Journal* is a quarterly publication that is geared more for adults working to promote youth development such as youth and community workers, educators, administrators, researchers, and policymakers. A brand new academic journal that will soon be published is the *Journal of Positive Youth Development*. This new journal will combine youth development research and practice. I have been invited to serve as one of the editors.

Are there any days, weeks or months dedicated to national youth development?

There really aren't any, because there isn't an organized youth policy in the U.S. so there is no organized movement dedicated to youth development.

Are there any countries that do have organized youth movements that we should look to for guidance?

Yes, internationally there are several places that do have organized youth movements. For example, the United Nations hosts a Triennial World Youth Summit. Also, the European Union has national youth commissions.

How do youth development initiatives benefit society at large?

The answer on how youth benefit is easy: they learn new skills, get connections, and are able to understand the roles and responsibilities of living in a democratic society. The larger revelation is that youth development positively influences adults, too. People don't often realize this.

A report that we did with the University of Wisconsin, Madison, sheds some light on how youth development affects adults. The report, *Youth in Decision-Making: A Study on the Impacts of Youth on Adults and Organizations*, releases three new findings on youth development that really have not been discussed before. We found that: (1) young people enrich organizations' discussions; (2) young people are strong contributors to boards; and (3) better decisions are made when youth are involved in decision making. We hope that these findings make people realize that youth development activities have a greater impact than influencing youth themselves, but that they can also foster substantial change in other areas.

What advice would to give to others who want to get involved with youth development?

The main advice I'd give is to look around at local nonprofits that already exist and investigate the opportunity to use an existing organization to partner with youth to further promote that organization's mission. I would recommend that adults start working with young people and help them start programs. In every place where adults meet, I'd challenge them to ask themselves: Are young people here? What could young people do in a decision-making process? What avenues would they choose? How can I get them involved? Then, adults can start to really see the change that can happen when they utilize the talents of young people.

Rural Schools Participate in Youth Civic Engagement Initiative

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developed a student leadership curriculum for middle and high school students—Adventures in Leadership—that fosters youth community engagement and leadership skills. As a result of this curriculum, students are now voting members on the Cabot School Board. All three schools offer a civics course as part of the high school curriculum, and two of the three have a capstone senior project course that involves community-based initiatives. People's Academy recently embarked on an innovative high school reform model and has added a collection of mini-courses that encourage student leadership: Social Activism, REAL (developing entrepreneurial expertise), STOMP (Students Together Organizing Mentoring Projects), and Service to the Community. All three schools are interested in making changes to the curriculum that will foster more youth civic engagement.

Feedback

Do you have any questions, comments or feedback? Something got you jazzed up? Think we should cover your story? Have an idea for us? Have a rural education need that we are not fulfilling? We greatly value your thoughts and opinions. Write to the Editor at the Rural School and Community Trust: 1825 K Street, NW, Suite 703, Washington, DC 20006. Or e-mail: editor@ruraledu.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

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Publications *of Note*

New from the Rural Trust

Dollars and Sense: The Cost Effectiveness of Small Schools

By Barbara Kent Lawrence, Ed.D., et al.
KnowledgeWorks Foundation, Rural School and Community Trust, and Concordia, Inc., September 2002

Research on the relationships of school size, poverty, and student achievement has shown that small schools are better for kids—particularly children from poorer communities. Now, a new report goes head-to-head with conventional wisdom about economies of scale, demonstrating that smaller schools can be cost-effective as well. *Dollars and Sense: The Cost Effectiveness of Small Schools* is a collaborative effort of the KnowledgeWorks Foundation, the Rural School and Community Trust, and Concordia, Inc. It draws on the work of architects, researchers, and top school facilities experts to challenge the common belief that big schools are cheaper to build and maintain than are small ones. Their conclusion: investing tax dollars in small schools makes good economic sense.

Single copies of *Dollars and Sense* are available free of charge by writing the Rural School and Community Trust, 1825 K St., NW, Suite 703, Washington, DC 20006, or sending e-mail with complete mailing address to info@ruraledu.org.

Other New Publications

All Over the Map: A Look at State Policy to Improve the American Public High School

by Monica Martinez and Judy Bray
Institute for Educational Leadership, June 2002

This report, recently issued by the National Alliance on the American High School, examines trends, policy assumptions, and tensions that key state education statutes and board requirements hold for high schools. The state policies considered are divided into three categories: policies specific to high schools; policies that detail opportunities to learn; and policies that are new and in rapid flux. A hard copy is available for free on written request by either fax (202) 822-8405 or by filling out an online order form at http://www.iel.org/pubs/order.html (shipping costs may apply).

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Volume 3, No. 6
December 2002

THE RURAL SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY TRUST

ISSN 1532-642X

Rural Roots

News, Information, and Commentary from the Rural School and Community Trust

Rural Trust Named One of Worth *Magazine's* 100 Best Charities

The Rural School and Community Trust has been named one of *Worth* magazine's 100 Best Charities in the December issue of the magazine. The Rural Trust has the distinction of being the only rural education group selected by the magazine in the article "To Give Well, To Give Wisely," which names the 100 top charities in the U.S.

"We are very pleased to be named one of the best managed, most focused, and wisest places for donors to invest their money," said Rachel Tompkins, president of the Rural Trust.

The Rural Trust, along with hundreds of other organizations, went through a rigorous application process. Charities that were selected are considered to have the "greatest impact in the field" and "wisest use of donor dollars." *Worth* selected charities in six categories: health,

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Principal Sara Johnson works with students at Henry L. Slater Elementary School in Burns, Oregon.

Challenges and Rewards of Rural School Leadership

By Elaina Loveland

It takes a special person to lead a rural school.

Like school leaders throughout the country, rural school principals and superintendents must recruit teachers and deal with often lower funding than needed. But in rural areas, depending on the geographic location, there are other problems such as declining enrollments, the threat of consolidation and high principal and superintendent turnover.

Rural principals often take on many different types of responsibilities compared with principals of larger schools that have more administrative staff. "In larger schools, people are assigned to do many different tasks. In rural schools,

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Rural*Datebook*

Promoting the Economic and Social Vitality of Rural America: The Role of Education

Sheraton New Orleans Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana

This workshop, sponsored by the Economic Research Service, Southern Rural Development Center, and the Rural School and Community Trust, aims to stimulate a focused attention on rural education-related issues in America, particularly the capacity of rural schools to provide high quality education to their students and to serve as an engine for local economic development activities. Details about the workshop are available at http://srdc.msstate.edu/ruraled/index.html. Please e-mail Bo Beaulieu at ljb@srdc.msstate.edu if you have questions.

American Council on Rural Special Education 23rd Annual National Conference

Sheraton City Centre Hotel, Salt Lake City, Utah

"Rural Survival" is this year's theme of the American Council on Rural Special Education's 23rd Annual National Conference. The conference will highlight teaching strategies and programs that have been used successfully in K-12 classrooms. Please visit http://www.extension.usu.edu/acres to learn more. Contact Dr. Jack Mayhew at (801) 626-6268 or by e-mail at jmayhew@weber.edu for additional information.

26th Annual Appalachian Studies Conference

Richmond, Kentucky

Berea College and Eastern Kentucky University will co-host the 26th Annual Appalachian Studies Conference in Kentucky next March. This year's theme is "Building A Healthy Region: Environment, Culture, Community"; The Appalachian Studies Association brings together scholars, teachers, community and regional activists, entrepreneurs, planners, officials, families, young people, old people—people who care passionately about the region, who want to learn from each other, and who want to make a difference in their communities. Conference information is online at http://www.appalachianstudies.org. For questions, call Gordon McKinney at (859) 985-3141 or send an e-mail to gordon_mckinney@berea.edu.

To list your upcoming events in the February 2003 newsletter, please contact Rural Roots at editor@ruraledu.org or call (202) 955-7177, ext. 14.

Rural Trust Named One of Worth *Magazine's 100 Best Charities*

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human services, environment, education, relief/development, and arts/culture. To apply, the Rural Trust had to provide a detailed description of its work, financial statements for the past three years and supporting materials including newsletters, policy reports, and the biennial *Why Rural Matters*.

The honor of being listed as one of the top charities in *Worth* magazine in immeasurable—the publication reaches more than 500,000 people, which will surely get the word out about the value of place-based learning and the Rural Trust's work improve education by connecting schools and communities.

Editor's Note

Thanks to all readers who returned change of address forms in response to our mailing earlier this year. Due to an error, the U.S. Postal Service has been holding many of these change of address forms since January 2002. We are now updating our database with the correct addresses as quickly as possible. Thank you for your continued patience.

THE RURAL SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY TRUST

Rural Roots

Vol. 3, No. 6 December 2002
ISSN 1532-642X

Rural Roots is published six times per year by the Rural School and Community Trust (Rural Trust). The Rural Trust is the premier national nonprofit organization addressing the crucial relationship between good schools and thriving rural communities. Working in some of the poorest, most challenging rural places, the Rural Trust involves young people in learning linked to their communities, improves the quality of teaching and school leadership, advocates for appropriate state educational policies, and addresses the critical issue of funding for rural schools.

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Place-Based Project Connects Rural Children in Tennessee and Bulgaria

The University of Tennessee and Bourgas Free University in Bulgaria have collaborated to introduce the *My Place, Our Place, Your Place* learning model to rural children in both countries in a two-year project funded by the U.S. Department of State.

The *My Place, Our Place, Your Place* concept combines two educational models generally thought to be in competition. The place-based model focuses on the local culture, environment, and skills for the local career market. The internationalization model focuses on intercultural issues, the global environment and skills for the global economy. Using this curriculum, Tennessee students will learn about their own culture by interpreting it to students in Bulgaria and vice versa. They will learn about their own government, environment, etc. by comparing them with those of their partner country. When students in Bulgaria learn about the *lev* or the *Euro* in the local economy, they will also learn about the dollar in Tennessee, and so on.

Select K–12 school principals, teachers, and students from rural Tennessee and Bulgaria will participate in the program. Students, educators and community members will communicate via computers, taking the age-old "pen pal" model to a whole new level. Students will have "e-pals" to communicate electronically using software that will translate messages into the student's native language. In addition, over two summers, professors, principals and teachers will exchange to learn about local culture, design curriculum, and teach a course on the *My Place, Our Place, Your Place* model at both universities. This unique curriculum will offer students the skills to succeed in the global arena while affirming the value of the home place, encouraging students to stay, return, or maintain connections to sustain their home economy and culture.

Wartburg Central High School in Wartburg, Tennessee is one of the rural high schools that will be participating in the *My Place, Our Place, Your Place* project. Principal Edd Diden said that place-based education is a key component to the initiative because students can't understand or appreciate another culture until they can understand and appreciate their own. Also, according to Diden, *My Place* will hopefully become a "replicable model of how to do place-based education in a global marketplace." Of course, Diden, who is a doctoral student at the University of Tennesee-Knoxville, is pleased to be part of the project. "It's exciting for us because it allows our school to have a voice in school reform at an international level," he says.

News*Briefs*

Rural Leaders Sign "Nebraska City Declaration" to Improve Rural Policies

More than 200 national authorities on rural economic development adopted the "Nebraska City Declaration" at the "Rural Matters: Making Place and Culture Count!" symposium held October 16–18, 2002 in Nebraska City, Nebraska. The declaration is modeled after one adopted by European nations in 1996 and claims that federal and state policies have largely failed rural America—which has 80 percent of the landmass in the U.S. and one-quarter of the nation's population. Furthermore, the document challenges the notion that rural America's economic survival is dependent solely upon agriculture and agricultural business.

"Agriculture is major here in the Midwest, but rural policy in West Virginia is mining policy and in the Pacific Northwest it's forestry and in the Ozarks it's retirement," said Sam Cordes, a University of Nebraska agricultural economist who helped coordinate the meetings.

The declaration aims to bring attention to struggling rural areas with the hope that rather than attempting to fulfill the needs of rural America in a piecemeal fashion, policymakers will realize that large-scale improvements are needed.

The Nebraska City Declaration is being distributed to local governments, industry groups and rural people across the country for feedback before a final version is delivered congressional leaders in January 2003. For the text of this declaration, go to http://www.rupri.org/ruralmatters/nebraska_city_declaration.htm.

Rural Trust Releases Report on Rural School Leadership in the South

The Rural School and Community Trust has released *Rural School Leadership in the Deep South: The Double-Edged Legacy of School Desegregation*, the first of a two-part report intended to give public voice to school leaders in the South.

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Youth*Council*

The Sharing of Authority

From the Rural School and Community Trust National Youth Council

"An influential principal has the courage to stand alone. She has a commitment, above all else, to doing what is best for children despite the dictates of others. She challenges assumptions and traditions and helps others do so as well. . . It's time for a new conception of the school principal, one based on a skilled, passionate, moral commitment to students' and teachers' learning—and to the leader's own learning."

— *Learning by Heart* by Roland Barth

The job of a high school principal these days is not an easy one. With increasing pressure to ensure that all students achieve at high levels, principals spend their time juggling the demands of external accountability measures, advocating for increased resources, managing highly charged political environments, and promoting high quality instruction. Many view their jobs as running schools *for* students, rather than *with* students. The principals who do distribute leadership to others within schools, usually look to adults—teachers, parents, community members—to share decisions. Occasionally, innovative administrators partner with the energy, talent and voices of students in clarifying the policies, purposes and values of the school.

Two members of the National Youth Council recently discussed the important roles their high school principals played in the development of youth-adult partnerships. James Gutierrez, a senior at the University of New Mexico, and Maura Shader, a freshman at Hampshire College in Massachusetts, each had influential experiences that made profound and lasting impacts on their attitudes about leadership and education.

"When students work together with school administrators to make their schools better, the results can be transformational," said Gutierrez. "During my senior year of high school, Eloy Roybal took the helm of the school. The first time I met him, I noted there was something different about him. He spoke to me, a student, with respect and seemed to value what I had to say."

Roybal founded the Principal's Action Council (PAC) at Robertson High School in Las Vegas, New Mexico during the fall of 2000. As a founding member, Gutierrez remembers the excitement of being a part of PAC's inaugural year. "I had never heard of such a thing before, but I could tell it was something important. Mr. Roybal explained that PAC would comprise other students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members. Each would bring individual perspectives to help design school policies. From the start, there was great rapport among all, and the students, especially, were enthusiastic about the opportunity that the principal had given us."

As a voting member of the Principal's Action Council, Gutierrez helped reconstruct the school handbook, examine the school's strengths and weaknesses, and develop leadership skills. "It was quite an experience for me to have this adult who was in charge ask me what I thought should be done. I think the greatest part of this situation was that we all worked together to accomplish our goals!"

Maura Shader's high school principal also demonstrated a strong belief in youth-adult partnerships. Jeff Place was principal of Peoples Academy in Morrisville, Vermont, during Shader's four years of high school. The moment she entered high school, Shader sensed her principal executed different educational strategies. "It was evident that Jeff Place's presence in the school was initiating change among the students, teachers, and staff," she said. Shader reported that her principal interacted with students on a daily basis: "He stood in the halls during lunch break, attended soccer games, and participated in drama productions—assuming acting roles in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Wizard of Oz*. Because he worked to develop and maintain relationships with the school and community, students regarded him as an accessible and approachable partner with whom to formulate change."

James Gutierrez, a senior at the University of New Mexico, with his former principal, Eloy Roybal.

Working with Place, Shader became involved in the Vermont Rural Partnership, a group that focuses on place-based education and youth-adult partnerships in rural schools and communities. The conferences that Place and Shader attended together as partners focused on methods to make schools a welcoming place for students and adults in the community. Shader remembers her experiences fondly.

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First*Person*

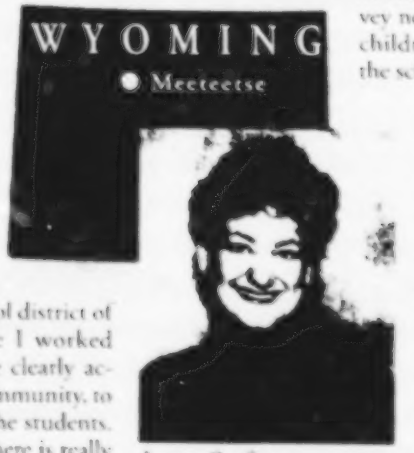
Diary of a Rural School Leader: What Really Matters Anyway?

By Jeanne Surface

I began as principal of Meeteetse Public Schools a few months ago. When I interviewed for the position, I knew that the Wyoming State Department of Education had raised some accreditation issues with the district. I had a sense that most of the issues would be resolved pretty quickly with some simple corrections.

I was wrong. In fact, the district went from full accreditation to non-accreditation and back to conditional accreditation. The non-accreditation status was given to them because of a teacher teaching in a non-endorsed area. In this case, the teacher had a 7–12 English endorsement but was teaching middle school English without a middle school endorsement. Wyoming Department of Education had just implemented a new "rubric" that they use for accrediting districts. The rubric being used was exactly the same for all of the districts in the state regardless of size. Meeteetse, a district of 140 students K–12, was given the same rubric as Cheyenne Public Schools, a district of 13,000 students. I wondered how it could be that both districts could be evaluated in the same manner. Cheyenne, because of its size, typically manages itself by using bureaucratic constraints that aren't prevalent in small rural schools.

Coming into the district, I decided that I was ready for the challenge of improving instruction and raising test scores in this district. As I looked deeper, I realized that there really wasn't cause for concern. The students in this district were doing quite well on standardized test scores. Well *above the state average* in most cases. So, I wondered, what is really the problem here?



Jeanne Surface

I haven't been in a school this small but, in a school district of around 500 where I worked previously, we were clearly accountable to the community, to each other and to the students. In a small school, there is really nowhere to hide. For example, if a middle school English teacher does a poor job of teaching in one area, the high school teacher has to pick up the slack. There is no doubt that a change will occur the next year. If a teacher is unkind to children, parents will certainly expect a change to occur and will hold the principal accountable until it changes. We stand "naked" in front of our public every day. They know when we do well and when we don't. Most importantly, everyone has to pitch in to accomplish goals. There are no curriculum directors, no standards coordinators, and no department heads. Teachers, community members and administrators do it all.

"Everyone has to pitch in to accomplish goals. . . . Teachers, community members and administrators do it all."

I wonder what happened here? It seems like the district didn't have the paperwork in place that the Wyoming Department of Education expected for documentation. Some of the "corrective actions" needed were as follows: families who report zero income on free/reduced lunch applications needed to be contacted every six weeks to be sure that the income was still zero, a fire drill needed to be given during the four days that school was in session in August, a climate survey needed to be given to children in grades K–3, the school needed a systematic method of recording assessments for inclusion of correctives and enrichments, a home language survey needed to be given to all families, and several having to do with assessments and accountability. *For this, the school was told that it was second best—that they didn't deserve to be fully accredited by the state of Wyoming.* Community members were upset at the state, upset with the embarrassment that the school had caused and in general, concerned and confused about what happened. The superintendent invited the two women in charge of making recommendations to the state board to a community meeting in the district. They sat at a table and appeared like the Supreme Court to tell the community why the school had been given this label. Community members were ready to roll up their sleeves to get the job done. They were willing to do whatever it took to get the district's accreditation back to a fully accredited status. When a community member asked the "experts" how long it would take the school to get back to full accreditation, they remarked that it would take at least two years and we should consider hiring a consultant. Their message seemed to suggest that we didn't have the capability to make things better. Clearly, the problem was not a lack of knowing and understanding, as they seemed to suggest, it was getting the work done with a skeleton crew.

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Challenges and Rewards of Rural School Leadership

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principals do it all," says Donald Buckingham, principal of Sedgwick Elementary School in Sedgwick, Maine.

Despite the workload, educators choose to become school leaders for several reasons. Sara Johnson, principal at Henry L. Slater Elementary School in Burns, Oregon, was inspired. She once overheard a woman administrator colleague say: "If you believe you could go into administration to make a difference, you have a moral obligation to do it." Johnson took those words to heart and knew she had a calling to become a principal.

Rural leaders face unique challenges every day. The snapshots below attempt to bring to light some of the distinctive aspects of leading a rural school.

The Dual Principal

After 30 years of teaching high school English and drama, Christy Campbell decided she wanted to "help teachers be better teachers." So she took the plunge—she interviewed for a principalship at Lyman Middle School in rural Wyoming. Campbell landed the position, with a catch: the district was tacking on another school to her job—she would become the principal of both Lyman Elementary School and Lyman Middle School.

Now, three years later, Campbell is still a dual principal shuffling her day between two offices in two different buildings and heading a campus made up of four buildings altogether. "At least the buildings are in walking distance," she says.

A cutback in funds caused the Lyman district to combine two principal positions into one after the elementary school principal resigned.

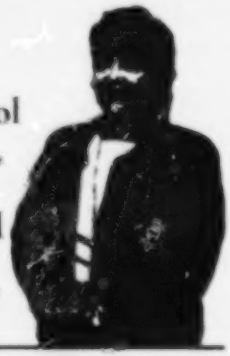
What makes Campbell's dual principal job even more demanding is that her schools are at two different levels. "This means double paperwork, not only for two different schools, but for different grades as well. "When I go to a superintendent's meeting, all the other principals have one set of papers. I have two: one set for the elementary school and one set for the middle school."

Campbell's situation is not all that unusual in rural areas.

Linda Pearl, from Escanaba, Michigan, has been principal at the same two K–6 elementary schools for eight years and has been a dual school principal for a total of 15 years. Pearl is currently the principal of Ford River Elementary School with 174 students and Franklin Elementary School with 190 students, located about 12 miles apart. Because of the distance between schools, Pearl spends Mondays and Wednesdays at one school, Tuesdays and Thursdays at the other and divides Friday between the schools. "My biggest challenge is getting to all activities at both schools," says Pearl. "But having a great faculty makes a difference."

Consolidation at Work

While many urban and suburban schools have enrollments increasing faster than they can hire teachers and build facilities, rural schools can have the opposite problem. Some rural schools have declining enrollments and, as a result, lose state funding. Norm Yoder, superintendent of Heartland Community Schools in Nebraska, got into administration because he was interested in school finance. As the leader of a consolidated school district that faces a steady decline in enrollment, school finance is a key concern for this rural administrator who must, by definition, "wear a lot of hats."



After 30 years of teaching high school English and drama, Christy Campbell decided she wanted to "help teachers be better teachers."

Heartland Community Schools was created when neighboring districts Henderson Community Schools and Bradshaw Public Schools merged five years ago. The consolidation did result in saving dollars, according to Yoder, but it did not solve the declining enrollment problem. There are fewer students in Heartland schools today than there were when there were two separate districts.

The district may look to consolidation in the future, but the success may not be as simple. When Henderson and Bradshaw merged, the districts had to

Educating Spanish-Speaking Children in Texas

"There is not enough of me to go around," says D'Ann Cathriner, describing her job as principal of Blessing Elementary School. The preK–5 school serving 220 students is located in Blessing, Texas, a small agricultural community on the Gulf Coast.

Due to its proximity to Mexico, Blessing Elementary School has many students who don't speak English. The school advocates total immersion to teach English to Spanish-speaking children.

A lot of the children are illegal aliens and do not attend school all year; many parents are migrant workers and divide time between Blessing, Texas and other locations.

"We feel it is our duty to educate all children when they are with us and it is rewarding to see the students developing language skills," says Cathriner.

Principals Leading Learning

Edd Diden, a 12-year veteran principal at Wartburg High School in Wartburg, Tennessee, believes that principals have the responsibility of helping teachers engage students in learning, not just by teaching, but by getting students to a higher level of understanding.

"Getting students engaged in education is not just playing the game of going to school," he says.

Diden says that "knowing is only part of the big picture" and "caring and passion have to be part of learning" in order for students to want "to do something about it." Getting students involved is a top priority for Diden; his mission is to "open teachers' eyes to place-based and project-learning." Recently, Wartburg High School was selected to participate in *My Place, Our Place, Your Place*, an international place-based learning initiative between the University of Tennessee and Bourgas Free University in Bulgaria.

Principal Edd Diden with students at Wartburg Central High School in Wartburg, Tennessee.

Diden is pleased that he and his school will be part of the two-year project. "Any leader has to be willing to take risks. You can't drive people to make changes—you have to do it with them," he says.

eliminate ten positions, but the state offered financial incentives for consolidation. That is no longer the case. Financing the school as enrollments decline pose a continuous problem and without financial assistance from the state, reconsolidation is a not as accessible as before.

"The state legislature is going to have to provide more funds," Yoder says. "Period."

For other school leaders who may look to consolidation due to community choice or state pressure, Yoder has this advice: "The best thing for a leader to remember in a consolidation is to keep the focus on the students. Kids mesh well. It's the adults who sometimes have problems."

Leadership in Native Schools

Little Singer Community School in Winslow, Arizona, headed by principal Mark Sorensen is a charter school for Native Americans rooted in bringing the students back home. Native American children often leave the reservation to find jobs, and trying to promote tribal culture and keep Native children home can be difficult, especially in areas like Winslow where the poverty rate is high and the school is the largest employer.

The school, founded in 1978, has 120 students and was established in memory of a Navajo medicine man who wanted to instill the values of Native culture and keep them alive on the reservation. Traditionally, Navajo medicine men were singers, hence the name of the school. Sorensen is also principal of the Star School near Flagstaff, Arizona, a K–6 school for Native students started just three years ago, which depends solely on solar power for its operation.

Being a leader at a Native school has challenges of its own, according to Sorensen. "It's one thing to want to bring students back home, but it's harder to address what are kids going to do back home," he says. Yet, Sorensen believes that the school's aim to "regenerate the multigenerational impact of traditional families" and keep Native children at home is an effort that is more than worthwhile. Teaching Native children with tribal culture integrated into the school's curriculum is at the heart of Little Singer Community School and Star School's mission. Through service to the people and the land, Sorensen hopes to keep Native traditions alive for children and keep them at home where they can impact future generations.

Recruiting Rural Teachers

It's no secret that salaries for rural teachers are often less than salaries for their urban and suburban counterparts. Rural teachers earn an average of $6,124 less per year than their counterparts in suburban and urban areas according to Rural Trust's *Why Rural Matters* report released in 2000 [an updated report will be published in 2003].

"Salaries don't often attract outsiders. There aren't many job opportunities for spouses," says Carlinda Purcell, former superintendent of the rural Warren County School District in North Carolina. Purcell is now associate superintendent for support services of Cumberland County Schools in Fayetteville.

Donald Buckingham, principal of Sedgwick Elementary School in Sedgwick, Maine, says that recruiting teachers in his small coastal town in Maine is becoming increasingly difficult. "We have a dual problem here," he says. "Not only do we have trouble competing with surrounding larger districts for competitive salaries, there is a high cost of living here due to our coastal location where real estate is priced quite high compared to most rural areas."

Buckingham says that in the last decade, more people have found a way to live in a highly desirable coastal community like Sedgwick and make a decent

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Challenges and Rewards of Rural School Leadership

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living. Technology and the willingness to take on long commutes have brought higher income families to the area. The economic demographics of children attending Sedgwick Elementary School are unusual. "About half the children are eligible for free and reduced lunch and the other half are from wealthier families," says Buckingham.

Teachers at Sedgwick Elementary don't earn high salaries, and coupled with the higher than average cost of living (compared to other rural settings), attracting and retaining teachers is tough.

About half of the staff at the school has been hired in the past three years. Other districts and schools and even other schools in the same districts can pay upwards of $5000 more per year.

"I try to get good teachers who are committed to the area," says Buckingham.

In an area like Sedgwick, commitment to place is the primary factor in getting educators to say put, because the salary alone just won't cut it.

Networking, Networking

The Vermont Rural Partnership (VRP), a coalition of 17 of Vermont's smallest, most rural, economically challenged schools and communities, offers unique networking opportunities for principals and supports place-based learning. Each August, the VRP hosts a Principal's Retreat, a required one-day meeting for principals in member schools. The retreat provides networking opportunities, place-based readings, and pairs new principals with a more experienced "buddy" principal. The VRP also has a "response team" to go to schools to help solve problems. Team members volunteer their service based on their expertise in order to ensure the most efficient problem-solving team possible.

Principal Sonja Davis of Burke Town School has been attending VRP's Principal's Retreat for five years. Initially her school, serving grades K–8, applied to be a part of VRP to get funding for students to get more involved in the community. But, happily, Davis got more than she bargained for. Burke Town School staff has participated in writing place-based curricula, the school has developed a strategic plan, and also has standard units based on place-based learning. "Being part of the partnership, we've gotten 100 times back in opportunities for staff," Davis says.

Director of the VRP and Peacham School Principal Margaret MacLean believes that principals are key in helping to implement place-based learning in schools. "Their role in place-based education is to facilitate the curriculum," she says. "Leaders need to know how to make it happen for teachers." To fill the need to educate principals on place-based education, VRP provides workshops in addition to the Principal's Retreat and encourages leaders to visit other schools where place-based learning is effective.

The VRP Principal's Retreat also exists to ease the leadership transition period due to high turnover of principals in Vermont—a trend that affects many other states across the nation, especially in rural areas. According to MacLean, the average time principals stay at one job is three years so there are new principals at the VRP Principal's Retreat every year.

"Leadership changes have been a huge issue," she says. "Often principals come

Rural School Leaders Honored

These rural principals are among 63 chosen as 2002 National Distinguished Elementary and Middle School Principals by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Association of Elementary School Principals.

Cynthia A. Eliser, a 2002 National Distinguished Principal

Name:	Cynthia A. Eliser
Position:	Principal
School:	Raceland Lower Elementary
Location:	Raceland, Louisiana
Size:	425 students (Pre-K to second grade)
Years as a Rural Principal:	8
Quote:	As a rural principal, people not only see me as the school principal, they see me as a "real" person. I go the same churches, stores, and businesses that they do!

Peggy Ames Nerud, a 2002 National Distinguished Principal

Name:	Peggy Ames Nerud
Position:	Principal
School:	Northside School
Location:	Wolf Point, Montana at Fort Peck Indian Reserve
Size:	219 students (grades 4–6)
Years as a Rural Principal:	14
Quote:	I get to know my students and parents as individuals and beyond the school day. You can make a difference working with them over a long period of time.

in and have a new agenda. There has to be buy in from teachers and community members."

Sara Johnson, principal of Henry L. Slater Elementary School in Burns, Oregon, notes that superintendent turnover is especially problematic in her rural district. "When a superintendent leaves, the district becomes fractured. Instead of working with one clear vision, schools start working independently and can create competition among the schools," she says.

It Takes Vision to Lead

For better or worse, education is not just about schools, but also about politics. Parents, educators and policymakers are raising questions about the accountability of education, its success rate, its methodologies and even its purpose. Rural school leaders play a key role in educating American's children, yet they are in the midst of politics as well.

"Our nation has to figure out what our schools are going to do. Are they supposed to maximize the potential of the individual or set a minimum standard of education across the board—it's hard to do both," states Mark Sorensen, principal of Little Singer Community School and the Star School in Arizona.

A rural school principal has to figure out how to balance individual achievement while maintaining standards. The role can be "both a quandary and a blessing" in the words Edd Diden, principal of Wartburg Central High School in Tennessee. "Typically in rural places, leaders can get very close to people in the community. The negative side is that there can be unbelievable expectations that a leader can't solve because they are societal problems," he says.

As rural school leaders, principals have to be up to the challenge to see resources that they have in rural areas, which are different than resources in urban and suburban settings. "The dominant culture sees resources as big buildings, but there are things we can enjoy that are nature-connected and these are resources too," says Sorensen. In order to recognize non-monetary resources in rural areas, Sorensen recommends that rural leaders, as a group, need to "realign our vision to see and appreciate the richness we have."

Diden agrees that leaders, educators and community members need to see rural areas in a new light. "School leaders must convince young people that living and learning in a rural place is an asset instead of a liability," he says. "Students, educators, and parents may catch a renewed vision and enthusiasm for local communities and the possibility of a bright future through education rooted in place."

Ultimately, rural school leaders believe that rewards of rural school leadership are worth the challenges. "It's a great job," asserts Donald Buckingham, principal of Sedgwick Elementary School in Maine. "We get to make a real difference in the school and how the community views education."

Feedback

Do you have any questions, comments or feedback? Something got you jazzed up? Think we should cover your story? Have an idea for us? Have a rural education need that we are not fulfilling? We greatly value your thoughts and opinions. Write to the Editor at the Rural School and Community Trust: 1825 K Street, NW, Suite 703, Washington, DC 20006. Or e-mail: editor@ruraledu.org. We look forward to hearing from you.

GrantsWatch

Grant: *Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation*
Funder: *National Trust for Historic Preservation*
Deadline: *February 1, 2003*

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is offering grants through the Johanna Favrot Fund for Historic Preservation for projects that contribute to the preservation or the recapture of an authentic sense of place. Funds may be used for professional advice, conferences, workshops, or education programs, and grants range from $2,500 to $10,000. The annual deadline for applications is February 1. For more information contact Melissa Curran at (202) 588-6197 or by e-mail: psf@nthp.org. To learn more about the National Trust for Historic Preservation and additional funding opportunities, please visit http://www.nthp.org.

Grant: *National School Library Media Program of the Year Award*
Funder: *Follett Library Resources and The American Association of School Librarians*
Deadline: *January 3, 2003*

Sponsored by Follett Library Resources, this award recognizes exemplary school library media programs in three categories: large school district (over 10,000 students), small school district (under 10,000 students), and single school. The winners in each of the three categories will receive $10,000. The award honors programs that emphasize the importance of the school library media program as an integral part of the instructional process An application is available online at http://www.ala.org/aasl/awards.html. For more information contact AASL, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611; (800) 545-2433, ext. 4381 or e-mail kchaney@ala.org.

Grant: *NEA Fine Arts Grant*
Funder: *National Education Association*
Deadline: *February 3, 2003*

Sponsored by the National Education Association Foundation, the NEA Fine Arts grants are awarded, through local NEA affiliates, to enable fine arts teachers to create and implement fine arts programs that promote learning among students at risk of school failure. Programs must address the arts (e.g., painting, sculpture, photography, music, theater, dance, design, media, or folk arts). Ten grants will be awarded in the amount of $2,000. Grant funds may be used for resource materials, supplies, equipment, transportation, software, and/or professional fees. To learn more, visit http://www.nfie.org/programs/finearts.htm or call (202) 822-7840.

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The Sharing of Authority from page 4

"With Mr. Place, I worked closely with students and teachers from my community in developing projects that highlighted the benefits of place-based education and youth-adult partnerships. Without the guidance and enthusiasm of Jeff Place, Peoples Academy would not be where it is today," she said.

The roles of principals such as Eloy Roybal and Jeff Place outlast the high-school careers of their students. The significance of their role, though, stays active in the lives of students for years to come. James Gutierrez and Maura Shader will remember their principals not simply because they were authoritative figures for four years of their lives. Rather, Gutierrez and Shader, along with thousands of other students, remember their innovative administrators because they realized that authority in governing schools resides in involvement of everyone—from the principal to the tenured teacher to the youngest student.

Eloy Roybal retired in June 2002 after 27 years as a teacher and school administrator in rural schools throughout New Mexico.

Jeff Place is now the special education coordinator of the Lamoille South Supervisory Union in Vermont.

News Briefs from page 3

From the conception of this report, the Rural Trust sought to identify the special challenges and opportunities for school leadership within the context of the unique conditions and circumstances of rural places. The report comes from discussions with the Rural School Leaders Working Group (comprising 20 principals, superintendents and instructional supervisors from Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi) to discuss the issues, challenges and opportunities for school leadership from their individual and collective perspectives as experienced leaders in what are arguably among the most difficult places in the country to operate a school. Their insights and articulated needs are reflected throughout this report. The data collected from the Rural School Leaders Working Group are summarized in several important findings with implications for approaching rural school leadership in the South. A "Ventures in Leadership" grant from Wallace Reader's Digest Funds provided funding for the Rural Leaders Working Group and the publication of the report.

Rural Trust Affiliates Receive Grant to Continue Curriculum

The Vermont Rural Partnership (VRP) and the Vermont Children's Forum (VCF) have received a $185,000 grant from the Vermont Department of Education and Training to further student leadership development work already under way.

In 1998, the two groups joined forces to create a dynamic youth leadership curriculum. Eleven middle and secondary level students and nine adults from around the state formed a working group to explore ideas and construct a model committed to authentic youth-adult partnerships. The outcome was a curriculum that fully integrates student leadership development with place-based education and service learning, fostering meaningful youth-adult partnerships in the process. The "Our Voices, Our Community" curriculum was designed for all teens, but particularly offers youth who are nontraditional leaders—or those deemed at-risk—an experience to identify their strengths, set goals, and build the necessary skills to help them attain their life vision. The curriculum honors multiple learning styles and is adaptable to meet the needs of youth with diverse learning and developmental challenges. It is flexible in that it can utilize both the school setting or a community-based setting. The curriculum has already been piloted at 12 sites subsequent to two statewide training sessions. An innovative year-long course based on the curriculum is currently in progress at three schools.

With the new grant, VRP and VCF plan to update their inventory of youth leadership programs, fine-tune the curriculum, introduce its availability to agencies who desire this resource and seek their collaboration, conduct four training sessions, evaluate and revise the curriculum and training format, and develop a plan for sustainability. In the future, the groups plan to share the "Our Voices, Our Community" curriculum nationally. For more information, contact Helen Beattie by e-mail at hnbeattie@aol.com.

New Resources for Small Town Leaders

The National Center for Small Communities (NCSC), based in Washington, DC, has two new resources for small town leaders and rural development practitioners.

The Thriving Home Network is a fully searchable Internet database which compiles more than 50 community and economic development case studies drawn from small communities. It is available free of charge at http://www.smallcommunities.org/ncsc/ (click on "new resources").

Technology and the Grit at the Grassroots is a 68-page guidebook that provides information on effective technology-led economic development strategies for distressed rural communities. The book provides practical advice on how to implement the latest technology in rural areas and has been distributed to regional and state economic organizations and agencies in order to reach small town leaders. For more information, please visit www.smallcommunities.org.

Diary of a Rural School Leader

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I asked if there were schools that they would hold up as having met accreditation at the level that they expected? One of the women said, "Cheyenne, of course." She didn't stop at that; she commented about how Cheyenne was able to do all of this with only one area that needed to be corrected and it was difficult for her to understand how a school the size of Meeteetse could have not met the expectation of the rubric. It was a pretty "telling" comment in my mind. I wondered if she had given any thought that it might be different to accomplish these feats with an instructional staff of 22 compared with a staff of more than 1,100. I had some Cheyenne people in a principal preparation class that I taught this summer for the University of Wyoming. There is no doubt in my mind that they do an excellent job of educating kids, but circumstances in the two communities are vastly different.

Sadly, this school has been given the message that they are second best. If they were really good, they would do things like Cheyenne does. The age-old societal view once again comes in that bigger is better. I don't think I can stomach that view.

Since that meeting in August, I took on the challenge and rather than hire an "expert" from the outside, I will be the assistant superintendent and will work on a daily basis with the staff to take some of the burden off their shoulders with all of this accountability stuff. We've already done some of the bureaucratic hoop-jumping that they ask us to do and we continue doing great things for kids. I'm up for the challenge and will continue to champion the cause for small rural schools. If they really look deeply at what we do for kids, *our way*, I think they'll be really impressed.

Jeanne Surface is the assistant superintendent at Meeteetse Public Schools.

"Diary of a Rural School Leader" is an ongoing column that will appear periodically on the Rural School and Community Trust Web site. Visit www.ruraledu.org to read future columns.

Publications of Note

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high-performing community of schools that ensures both equity of opportunity and high-level achievement across all groups of students. The portfolio includes eight documents including: School Communities that Work for Results and Equity; Generally Accepted Principles of Teaching and Learning; Central Office Review and Results and Equity; Find, Support, Deploy, and Keep the Best Teachers and School Leaders; Developing Effective Partnerships to Support Local Education; First Steps to a Level Playing Field: An Introduction to Student-Based Budgeting; Assessing Inequities in School Funding within Districts; and Moving toward Equity in School Funding within Districts.

The toolkit is available at www.schoolcommunities.org/portfolio.html.

Schools and Communities Working Together

By Terri Anderson and Vicki Nelson
Center for School Change, June 2002

The Center for School Change, located at the University of Minnesota's Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, has published *Schools and Communities Working Together*, a handbook highlighting work in rural Minnesota communities. The book is based on a decade of research on rural Minnesota's schools and communities and offers improvement ideas for parents, educators and community members. The book is available in PDF format for download at www.centerforschoolchange.org.

Students in Service to America: A Guidebook for Engaging America's Students in a Lifelong Habit of Service

Corporation for National and Community Service, August 2002

As part of President George W. Bush's USA Freedom Corps, the initiative to encourage Americans to commit at least 4,000 hours of service to others throughout their lives, a guidebook has been published to help students learn the value of service. The *Students in Service to America* guidebook and CD-ROM were developed through a collaboration of the Corporation for National and Community Service, the U.S. Department of Education, the Points of Light Foundation, the Volunteer Center National Network, and the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse. The guidebook can be downloaded in PDF format from: www.studentsinservicetoamerica.org/guidebook/index.html. For more information on USA Freedom Corps, please visit www.usafreedomcorps.gov or call 1-877-USA-CORPS.

Submissions

Rural Roots contains stories that share the incredible variety of place-based work going on around the country, its successes and challenges. Stories on rural community development, individuals and organizations making a difference in education and community life, and practitioner interests are all highlighted throughout the year.

Rural Roots is published six times per year and is distributed to more than 6,000 constituents. We encourage stories that focus on groundbreaking place-based education projects, youth-adult partnerships, small schools and consolidation, economic development, conservation, the arts, and instructive resource guides geared to teachers, to name a few.

We publish stories ranging from 400 to 2,000 words. If you are interested in submitting an idea for an article, please e-mail the editor at editor@ruraledu.org or call (202) 955-7177. We cannot offer payment for articles.

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Publications *of Note*

New from the Rural Trust

Rural School Leadership in the Deep South: The Double-Edged Legacy of School Desegregation

By Doris Williams and Jereann King
Rural School and Community Trust,
October 2002

This new report is the first installment of a two-part series intended to give public voice to school leaders in the South. The report comes from discussions with the Rural School Leaders Working Group comprising 20 principals, superintendents and instructional supervisors from Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi to discuss the issues, challenges and opportunities for school leadership. The report is available for free from the Rural Trust and is available as a PDF download. Please visit http://www.ruraledu.org/publications.html for ordering information.

Other Publications

Battle Rock: The Struggle Over a One-room School in America's Vanishing West

By William Celis
Public Affairs Publishing,
November 2002

Battle Rock, a member of the Colorado Rural Charter Schools Network, is featured in a new book *Battle Rock: The Struggle Over a One-room School in America's Vanishing West*. From 1999-2000, author Bill Celis (former education correspondent for the *New York Times* and a reporter and columnist for the *Wall Street Journal*) lived in the community and attended Battle Rock School. Celis examines the role of the school within the community and according to the publisher, "puts to rest the common misperception that smaller communities offer simpler lives." The book can be purchased at bookstores worldwide and through online booksellers. For more details on ordering, please visit www.publicaffairsbooks.com.

Portfolio for District Redesign

School Communities that Work,
October 2002

School Communities that Work, an initiative of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform, has released a portfolio toolkit to introduce a new conception for a "smart district"—a

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